



The Philatelic Communicator

Journal of Writers Unit 30 of the

American Philatelic Society

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President's Message

By Charles J. Peterson

As most of you are well aware, this is the second time I've had the privilege of heading up Writers Unit 30. The first time was in 1981, when I learned just after the elections that I was being transferred to Germany. (Joe Frye memorialized that situation with a bogus 30-point headline reading "Peterson elected WU President—Leaves Country!")

This time around I expect to stay in place and pay the dues that come with the office.

Thanks are due to the immediate past slate of WU 30 officers for a good legacy and a smooth transition, particularly to past prexy Bob de Violini. I regret not getting to work with VP-West Tom Current, who helped so much ten years ago by organizing an informal Pacific Northwest regional group of philatelic writers and bibliophiles. I also regret that circumstances caused Diana Manchester to drop out of the election; her ideas and style would have done wonders for the organization.

One of the first things on my agenda is to try to provide additional services for our members. Let me know what you think would be helpful to philatelic writers/editors/publishers. Give those thoughts to me as problems (along with potential answers, if you have them) and we'll see if we can find a useful solution.

One program we're starting immediately is a critique service. It has always seemed unfortunate that there's no established process to critique works until they're published, at which point reviewers and judges get to explain how those works could have been improved. This new service is an attempt to correct that situation.

The mechanics for critiquing periodicals are relatively straight-forward, and are laid out on page 69.

Dealing with book manuscripts—which may be in various shapes ranging from rough concept or first draft to galley proofs—is more of a challenge. I know from experience that a thorough job of copy editing can take hundreds of hours. It's

►► Page 69, column one.

What Do They Pay?

By Stephen G. Esrati

I began writing for the commercial philatelic press in 1958 when I began writing for *Weekly Philatelic Gossip*—free. My "pay" was three copies of issues in which my articles appeared.

In 1981, I asked Ed Neuce, then editor of *Linn's*, if he would be interested in articles I was then writing for *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland. He accepted and I began expanding my *Plain Dealer* columns (for which I was paid \$10 a week added to my normal paycheck as a copy editor) into lengthier pieces.

I began a long hassle with the payroll department at *The Plain Dealer* in 1980 to have the free-lance pay come separately, to allow me to put it into a Keogh retirement account. The paper resisted mightily because of the added bookkeeping, but I won a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service so that money eventually did find its way into a Keogh plan.

I do not recall what I was paid at *Linn's* in the beginning. But when Michael Laurence assumed the editorship, the agreed-to price was \$50 for a "long" column and \$25 for a "short" piece. When Laurence and I disagreed on what constituted a "long" or a "short," Laurence suggested paying \$40 for each and every published piece.

From the beginning, Laurence was upset that the articles I wrote for *Linn's* also appeared in *Canadian Stamp News*. I told him that Neuce had felt *CSN* not to be a competitor for readership and had specifically agreed to allow me to write for *CSN*.

Because I have a checking account in Canada, I asked *CSN* to pay me in Canadian currency. In its early years, *CSN* printed one of my pieces in each of its fortnightly issues and paid me \$20 (Canadian). The Bank of Nova Scotia charged me non-resident tax on my account balances, an amount I could deduct from my Form 1040 as a foreign tax. I declared the Canadian earnings on my Schedule C as payment in (converted) U.S. dollars using the current exchange rates. *Canadian Stamp News* now pays me \$75 per column, but does not run it in each issue.

►► Page 71, Column one.

The Philatelic Communicator

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Writers Unit 30 has as its primary objective the encouragement and improvement of philatelic writing in all of its various forms.

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All submissions for publication, without exception, are subject to being edited. Opinions expressed in *The Philatelic Communicator* are those of their authors, but not necessarily of APS Writers Unit No. 30, its officers, or agents. Letters received by the editor may be published unless labeled "Not for Publication."

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WU 30 at STaMpsHOW 91

By Alan Warren

STaMpsHOW 91 was held at Philadelphia's Civic Center, site of INTERPHIL 76. It had the fifth highest attendance of any APS show. Of interest to WU 30 members were the Editors' Seminar on Saturday morning, and the Writers Unit Breakfast on Sunday.

The seminar featured a panel of three well known editors, and the author served as moderator. The editors were John Hotchner, editor of *The Philatelic Exhibitor*; Ken Lawrence, who edits *The Philatelic Communicator*; and Barbara Mueller, who has edited a number of periodicals including the *Congress Book*. The panel fielded several questions known in advance as well as queries from the audience.

How to get people to write for publications was answered simply with, "By nagging!" Quite often an editor will establish rapport with an author and will suggest topics for features, while cultivating in the author a desire to write more. One editor made it a practice to respond promptly to every submission by dropping a post card to the author, as a way of giving thanks and encouragement.

Another question dealt with how extensively an editor should alter a manuscript before advising the author. This is a matter of judgment, as a few authors stipulate that nothing be changed without their knowledge or permission. Most authors recognize the editor's responsibility to correct grammar, punctuation, and similar mechanical details. Editors felt that if they needed to make substantive changes, they should advise the author.

A more delicate question concerned the need for editorial policy or even an editorial board or authority to review or approve editorials before they go to press. Here the panel felt quite strongly that if such authority is required by a journal, then maybe they really don't need an editor. Some panelists do bounce their ideas off an officer or other members before their material gets into print, especially if it is strongly opinionated matter.

Many members of the audience were pleased to gain some insight into how editors operate and what they expect. This type of forum could easily be expanded in future WU 30 meetings using a different panel and additional questions.

The WU 30 Breakfast on Sunday opened with the invocation by veteran member George Martin. Secretary-Treasurer George Griffenhagen reported on membership status and advised that printing expenses for the *PC* were running over, and steps were being taken to contain costs. Steve Rod gave a short talk on international philatelic exhibition catalogs as literature sources that contain much useful information.

Literature Jury Chairman Charlie Peterson presented the awards, listed elsewhere in this issue, and Ken Lawrence gave his editor's report. Bob de Violini announced the latest writers elected to the WU 30 Hall of Fame—Richard Graham, Frank Blumenthal, Burton Sellers, and the late Edgar Lewy.

Following some door prize drawings, incoming President Charlie Peterson concluded the meeting with announcement of a new critique service (described in his article on page 69) as the first of a number of benefits that WU 30 needs to offer

DEADLINES

For receipt of copy by the editor

First Quarter November 20, 1991

Second Quarter . . . February 20, 1992

Third Quarter June 20, 1992

members in order to retain and expand our membership base.

Plans are already under way for WU 30 get-togethers at the APS spring meeting at World Columbian Stamp Expo 92 in Rosemont, Illinois next May, and at STaMpsHOW 92 which will be held August 27-30 in Oakland, California. □

1991 Writers Hall of Fame Inductees

Edgar Lewy

"Philately, like other branches of human activity, suffers from an information explosion." So wrote the late Edgar Lewy, the British philatelic journalist whose mission and livelihood over a period of 30 years was to sort out this information and make it useful for the contemporary philatelist, amateur or professional, publisher, or cataloguer. In this country, Lewy was best known as the London correspondent of *Linn's Stamp News*, where his columns always contained just that elusive tidbit that other writers missed.

For his columns he drew on his personal enterprise, the truly unique fortnightly publication, *New Stamps*, which illustrated 300 to 600 of them in each issue, along with insights of production and design. He could write knowledgeably about the former because of his graduate degree in printing from Leeds University, and about the latter because of his ability to translate official announcements.

In Britain he was also known for investigative journalism, usually reporting on philatelic skulduggery along with trade news in *The Philatelic Exporter* under the pseudonym "Strand." Most recently, he spearheaded the exposé of the ProPhil Forum reproductions of great rarities. He also did feature articles for all the commercial collector magazines.

Lewy died on February 16, 1991, at the age of 64. Born in Berlin, he escaped Nazi Germany at the age of ten, and made his home in Britain where he met and married his helpmate Lilly, another youthful Nazi refugee. He was a founding member of the AIJP, the international philatelic journalists' organization. His passing leaves an almost irreplaceable role in a specialized area of philatelic literature. The Writers Unit No. 30 wishes to memorialize his contributions by inducting him posthumously into its National Philatelic Writers Hall of Fame.

Richard B. Graham

The U.S. postal history field has been blessed with many capable writer/researchers, but none more faithful and fruitful than Richard B. Graham. The now-retired engineer from Columbus, Ohio, wrote his first article in 1960 for Robson Lowe's *The Philatelist*. The number of such articles has now grown to more than 650. As weekly columnist for *Linn's Stamp News*, he has produced 430 columns and continues to add to the total, writing about complicated subjects in an easy-to-understand style.

He has served the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society for over a quarter-century as the 1861-68 section editor of its quarterly, *The Chronicle of U. S. Philatelic Classic Issues*, and continues to serve in that capacity. He has also edited for the society Mortimer Neinken's *The United States One-Cent Stamp of 1851 to 1861*, Baker's *U. S. Classics*, and the Towle-Meyer

tome, *Railroad Postmarks of the U. S. 1861-1886*. In recognition of these labors, Dick Graham has received four Classics Society awards for distinguished writing and service—the Ashbrook, Brookman, Chase, and Perry Cups.

Among his other works are 64 articles for *The American Philatelist* since 1969, 11 articles on the Union in the Civil War for *The SPA Journal*, seven for *The Postal History Journal*, five for *The Heliograph*, two for the American Philatelic Congress, three for the Philatelic Foundation's *Opinions* series, and eight for the *Confederate Philatelist*. For the last-mentioned, the Confederate Stamp Alliance conferred on him its Dietz Award.

Therefore, Writers Unit No. 30 feels it is most appropriate to add to these well-deserved accolades by elevating Dick Graham into the National Philatelic Writers Hall of Fame.

Frank H. Blumenthal

Editors are often the unsung heroes of the philatelic literature field, laboring under relentless schedules and with limited resources. Their own literary contributions to their publications are often anonymous, as they unselfishly turn the spotlight on their featured writers with bylines. One such toiler in the field recently retired after a quarter century in the aerophilatelic specialty.

As editor, catalog compiler, and columnist, Frank H. Blumenthal has done it all in the production of various forms of philatelic literature. From November 1971 to October 1989 he did it as editor of *The Air Post Journal*, the publication to which he devoted so much of his philatelic career. Co-compiler and reviewer of the 50-year index to the *APJ*, he also wrote the Foreign Air Mail first-flight cover section of several editions of the *American Air Mail Catalog*.

For this devotion over the course of preparing 216 monthly issues of the *Air Post Journal*, from soliciting and editing manuscripts and advertising to proofreading and dummy make-up and all the other details known so well to philatelic editors, he has been honored by special American Air Mail Society awards, as well as those of the Canadian Aerophilatelic Society and of FISA, the International Federation of Aerophilatelic Societies.

And now we, too, honor Frank Blumenthal, who professionally served in federal government for 34 years with the National Labor Relations Board as a legal digest editor, thus taking a busman's holiday, as it were, in philately, by inducting him into the Writers Unit No. 30 National Philatelic Writers Hall of Fame.

F. Burton Sellers

Mention Haiti to a Latin American specialist and you call to mind the most prolific writer on the subject—F. Burton Sellers. While many people associate Bud Sellers primarily with the administration of the APS, which he has served ably in several positions, including president, he has also simultaneously maintained his output of philatelic literature.

In that field, he has concentrated most of his efforts on scholarly studies in Haitian philately, nine of which have appeared in the American Philatelic Congress annals. One of

these received the McCoy Award for the best article of 1980, and two received the Drossos Award on separate occasions for the best article on a foreign subject. In addition, he was given the Barr Award three times for the best oral presentation of a study at the Congress Authors' Forums.

The mainstay and principal contributor to the quarterly publication *Haiti Philately* since its inception in 1975, Bud Sellers has also been a regular contributor to *The Essay-Proof Journal* for the past decade, and counts the *Collectors Club Philatelist*, *The American Philatelist*, and the *Postal History Journal* among other journals for which he writes. He also prepared the Haiti section in the APS book, *The Yucatan Affair*.

In a different but important area of philatelic journalism, he has excelled with his work of 30 years on the monthly publication of the Texaco Stamp Club, APS Chapter 233, which three times won the APS Chapter Publications contest.

He uses the practical knowledge gained from his own writings to serve as a judge in the American Philatelic Congress literature competitions, and is both an APS- and FIP-accredited literature judge. Because he has done so much for the cause of philatelic literature since the time as a 13-year old that he wrote a prize-winning essay on "Why I Collect Stamps," Writers Unit No. 30 is proud to elevate F. Burton Sellers to its National Philatelic Writers Hall of Fame. □

Editor's Bulletin Board

New Stamp Publication. In announcing the launch of a new, near tabloid size monthly magazine, *The Stamp Collector*, for collectors in the Asia-Pacific region, publisher Brian Moore wants writers to know that he's looking for correspondents worldwide. He'll pay up to AUS \$100 per 1,000 words. A sample copy is free from *The Stamp Collector*, GPO Box 3780, Sydney NSW 2001, Australia.

Participled. Steve Esrati has used the word "gravured" in several stamp publications to describe the new U.S. coil stamps. To create this past participle, Esrati must first have verbified *gravure*, formerly a noun, more recently an adjective. The neologism's meaning seems to be gravure-printed. If so, shouldn't it be spelt *gravur'd*?

Stamp Investing. Back in June when Salomon Brothers announced that stamps were back on the list of assets whose market performance is reported annually, I worried that we'd suffer a new round of telemarketing hucksterism based on that. Two months later, there wasn't much to worry about.

Lidman Award Nominees? Stamp writing appears in the latest Barnes & Noble book sale catalog and in *Wireless*, public radio's gift catalog. Both offer small groups of inexpensive U.S. stamps in frames, \$135 a pop. If that's too upscale, how about the Publisher's Clearing House offer of 80 major league baseball stamps and an album for four payments of \$4.99 each?

Flight Reading. "Stamps of Approval" is the title of Erik Markus's lavish spread on the colorful U.S. stamps of the last decade in the September issue of *Sky*, Delta Air Lines' in-flight magazine.

Playing Favorites. Assistant Postmaster General Gordon Morison's favorite newspaper is *Stamp Collector*, but publisher Jim Magruder has been too modest to mention it. During the stamp procurement hearing on Capitol Hill, witnesses and Congressional staffers inserted in the record articles from *The Wall Street Journal*, *Linn's*, and, yes, *The Philatelic Communicator*, critical of USPS. Morison asked for and received permission to enter a *Stamp Collector* clipping that defended the Postal Service.

Archival Preservation. Bob de Violini sent a Heloise's Hints column clipped from his local paper that tells how to preserve newspapers by deacidifying them in a milk of magnesia bath. It's probably a good technique for newsprint, but too risky to use on any valuable philatelic property.

Drop Him a Line. Hats off to Gerry Korn, editor of *The Interleaf*, for adding a new feature to the Booklet Collectors Club quarterly: "Letters, Questions & Comments from Our Members."

Hobby History. Writing in the July-August issue of *London Philatelist*, James Negus revisited the distinguished people who created "The Four Esses" and all the stamps they condemned in their crusade to save collectors from the avarice of "venal governments." May of 1995 will mark the centennial of the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps.

Changing the Guard. Karen Henry has departed *Stamps*, and Denise M. Axtell has been named acting editor. In her September 21 debut, Axtell promised no major changes, but two weeks later, confessing that "We have been lax in our coverage of U.S. material lately," she told readers to "hold onto your hats because there are more changes in the forecast."

Deadlines. First Quarter, November 20; Second Quarter, February 20; Third Quarter, June 20. The Second Quarter issue will be distributed at World Columbian Stamp Expo in Chicago, and the Third Quarter at STaMpsHOW in Oakland, so plan your submissions accordingly. □

A Note on Editorial Policy

At the 1990 Writers Breakfast in Cincinnati, I stated an editorial policy aim: If Joe Frye or I wish to respond to a writer's point of view, we must wait until the following issue, just as the rest of you must wait.

The purpose behind that policy is to encourage the widest range of response to everyone's published opinions.

As fate had it, even before that policy appeared in print (Fourth Quarter 1990), Bob de Violini expressed an opinion on editorial responsibility opposite what I was aiming for (Third Quarter 1990), specifically two points:

- When a letter opposes statements in an earlier letter, the person whose words are called into question should have the opportunity to respond in the same issue in which the letter will be published.

- Having a running cross-commentary from issue to issue benefits no one, is contrary to the real purposes of the organization, and therefore should be terminated as quickly as possible.

Though skeptical, I abandoned what I had begun, and increasingly tried to follow Bob's lead, despite my own feeling that continuing discussion is a good thing, not a bad thing, and that instant responses tend to stifle membership participation.

Thus I wasn't particularly surprised that Charlie Peterson (Third Quarter 1991) viewed this approach as one in which I sought to have the last word, even though it is a pole apart from my actual intention. No doubt others have had the same perception also.

Charlie and I had an opportunity to discuss all this at STaMpsHOW, and we agreed that I should go back to the earlier policy. This may, of course, reintroduce some of the problems that Bob's direction sought to solve, but I believe the benefits will outweigh the risks.

This won't satisfy everyone, particularly those who are uncomfortable with controversy no matter how patiently it is packaged, and those whose view of the Writers Unit mission is based on its original intent (whatever that may have been), but it seems to dovetail with the most oft-repeated feelings expressed in Diana Manchester's membership poll.

At Charlie's suggestion, we are adding to the masthead a sentence that summarizes our organization's mission, restating what past president George Martin wrote 18 years ago: Writers Unit 30 has as its primary objective the encouragement and improvement of philatelic writing in all of its various forms.

I hope everyone can take that to heart. *All* of its various forms means everything from chapter newsletters to stamp columns in daily papers, from specialist society journals to weekly philatelic tabloids, and much more besides.

To foster that purpose, *The Philatelic Communicator* must combine the tasks that *Editor and Publisher* (celebrate and popularize the latest fashions, techniques, and equipment) and *Columbia Journalism Review* (criticize and moralize) do for the mass media. *Ken Lawrence* □

Democracy, Now!

By Mark Kellner

Within days of the failed 60-hour "chicken coup" that changed the face of the Soviet Union, members of the Writers Unit were confronted with evidence that "one party" rule still exists in the world.

It exists, friends, in our ranks.

Election results for the 1991 elections showed both an appalling lack of participation (far less than *one-third* of the membership voted overall) and an equally appalling lack of choice.

As one letter to *The Philatelic Communicator* asked: "Why is there only one candidate for so many of the offices?" One could also ask, "How come so few people voted?"

There was only one candidate for president and for other offices, I believe, for two reasons. One, the apathy which pervades too much of our hobby's ranks. The other is based in the arcane rules WU30 has for elections.

The apathy question isn't the subject here. In fact, while I believe members should be encouraged to participate in WU30 to the fullest extent possible, I'd simply suggest that better election procedures would cure much of the apathy we've seen.

There was only one candidate for president because the rules discourage candidates from entering the race. Like our "big brother," the APS, Writers Unit rules require that a person wishing to run for president have had previous experience in an elective office in the Unit.

I had originally offered to run for president this year, hoping to back my oft-stated opinions about philatelic journalism with some hands-on work to help the hobby and its press. But, as was revealed to me *after* my offer to run had been accepted by the nominating committee, I wasn't already an officer. *Ergo*, I could not run for president.

It's odd, isn't it, that in a country where the actor who played "Billy Jack" in a couple of 1970s B-movies can stand up and declare for president of the *United States of America*, that the WU30's rules say a member can't just up and do the same within this group?

The argument for this rule in the APS as a whole is that the Society is a big enterprise and needs experienced leadership. I'll grant that for the moment, but would dissent if the same were applied to the Writes Unit.

WU30 members are either professional or semi-professional writers, who are active enough in the hobby to want to learn more about their craft. Many members are already active in local clubs or national specialty groups; therefore, we already possess the kind of organizational experience that is needed for leadership here.

Second, WU30 is much smaller, in every detail, than the APS. Its board, or Council, can be active in supervising the group's work. And as George Griffenhagen explained in Philadelphia last August, there's not enough money to really cover our expenses, let alone allow a president to run amok.

Another detriment to running—and voting—was the lack of opportunity for candidates to express their views. When told I could not run for president, I ran for the Council. However, a statement of what I felt was important for WU30 was not published in the *Communicator* because, I was told, no other candidate had sent in one.

Sorry, but that's not my fault. It *should* be a rule that those running for office would be required to say why and what they hope to accomplish. The inclusion of this information in *The American Philatelist* helped me in making election choices for the APS; don't Writers Unit members deserve the same opportunity?

Thus, two suggestions—no, make that two *pleas*—for our new Council and officers:

1. *It's time for the "you must have experience rule" to give way to allowing any member in good standing who wants to run the privilege of running.* And may the best person win.
2. *Put candidates' statements—and photos—in the Communicator before the election.* Anyone who wants a WU30 office should be able to say why.

As with the people outside the Russian Federation parliament, as with that brave soul some 30 months ago in Tianamen Square, and yes, as with my forebears who went to Israel before and after 1948, my request for this organization is simple, and the same: Democracy! Democracy, *now!* □

More on Literature Competitions

By Bob Rawlins

An article in the Fourth Quarter 1990 *PC* and a letter in the First Quarter 1991 issue continued the debate concerning the usefulness of literature competitions. Those and the critique just received from the APS Competition impel me to add my two cents worth.

I've had experience with literature competitions over the past four years. In 1988, I submitted the Universal Ship Cancellation Society *Convention Manual*, in 1989 the USCS *Naval Cover Cachet Makers' Catalog* and in 1990 and '91, the annual volume of the USCS *Log*, our monthly newsletter.

In three of four cases, the written critiques were useful and instructive; in one case, I felt the critique was shallow and that the jury had given the volume no more than a cursory glance.

But even in that case, the critique told me that the Introduction to the manual was not sufficiently detailed to give the jury a clear picture of what was intended. When I next update that manual, I'll certainly keep that point in mind.

I've also learned that not every literature competition provides a critique. For example, the Cardinal Spellman Literature Fair and Stamp Bourse awards a medal in the form of a paper certificate, but nary a critique.

After my first submission, I treated the Fair as a non-competitive show and sent my entry along with a stack of membership applications, suitably coded so that we could track the results. After two tries with Cardinal Spellman and another show this year with zero results, I've decided this is not a fruitful membership recruiting tool.

This past spring, we received a courteous letter from ORAPEX asking that we submit an entry for its first literature competition and I sent the 1990 *Log*. Evidently, Orapex spread its invitations far and wide with the result that the jury was overwhelmed according to the chairman's letter in the last *PC*.

I was very disappointed that Orapex provided no written critique and wonder why the organizers did not plan on this aspect considering that it is to be an annual event.

Even with several months available in advance of the show, I doubt that a panel of three judges and one or two apprentices can review in any sort of depth the significant amount of literature submitted for a large competition such as the Colopex or APS show. I expect the best they can do is a fairly detailed review of one issue of an annual, say, and a quick scan of the rest. But then, not every member of a stamp show Jury reads every page of every exhibit, so the two situations are analogous.

Janet Klug suggested (First Quarter 1991) that handbooks, special studies and books unlikely to be revised are better reviewed in the philatelic press, where the reviews themselves will have greater impact, than in a literature competition. I agree with that rationale and suggest that organizing committees would do well to narrow the field rather than inviting all and sundry to enter their handiwork. If nothing else, lightening the load on the jury will provide time for a more detailed review of the remaining entries.

I have a particular suggestion for periodical competition. A book has an introduction or preface to explain its purpose and writers lead off an article with an introductory paragraph. A

newsletter or periodical goes on from year to year. The masthead may tell generally what the group or society is all about, but probably not in the detail that the jury may need to evaluate the publication.

Moreover, many, perhaps most, of us are constrained by our society's budget and it would be instructive for the jury to know why the periodical's content is as it is. And so, I recommend that editors of periodicals be obliged or at least permitted to include the equivalent of an exhibit "title page," one double-spaced typed sheet, to serve as an introduction for that volume. Perhaps this is permitted even now, but if so, I have not seen mention in any prospectus.

In the past four years that I have been a member of WU30, I have read a number of suggestions for the conduct and evaluation of literature competitions. But I wonder who are the writers talking to and is anyone listening?

Bill Bauer's Third Edition of the *Manual of Philatelic Judging* contains one chapter of nine pages on judging philatelic literature. And that includes two pages on the FIP scoring system. Maybe, to address the complaints voiced in these pages, we need not just a chapter, but a manual on this subject alone. Ahh, but who will bell that cat?

Yes, literature competitions are an ego trip of sorts for an editor. But is that any different from an exhibitor who shuffles his stamp/cover exhibit around the country collecting medals? And what's the difference, anyway? We can all use a little stroking now and then.

Our readers may give us the input to improve our publication but they probably won't. My experience has been that a reader will often tell you if he or she likes something but will remain silent on dislikes.

Most readers are simply not qualified to suggest professional improvements. That is where the literature competition can be invaluable to the editor who seriously wants to improve his product. □

The Plate Number Coil Catalog: A Memoir

By Stephen G. Esrati

With the publication of the seventh edition of *The Plate Number Coil Catalog* in late August, I ended a post-retirement career with some satisfaction that the product had improved every year and had become a specialized catalog with a good reputation.

The 1991 edition contained 72 pages, including many computer-generated illustrations. But I'm getting ahead of my story.

The first edition in 1985 was produced after Myron G. Hill Jr. suggested that a list of dealers' prices I had sent out to members of the Plate Number Coil Study Group might make a useful catalog.

The study group had evolved in 1982 from four friends—all collectors of the West German Building Series of 1948—when I circulated the first round-robin newsletter about PNCs. "OK, you building inspectors," I wrote, "now there's a set of U.S. stamps that's interesting."

I began mentioning PNCs in *Linn's* and attracted some mail. One letter came from Ken Lawrence who wondered if I actually collected PNCs or was just writing about them. He

was invited to join the group. In the beginning, almost anyone who showed an interest was invited to join. Some of those joining never contributed anything.

You must remember that in 1982-83, collectors did not know what plate numbers existed. No catalog listed them. The greatest source of information at that time was a dealer's price list published by Dennis D. Chamberlain, also a member of the group.

The idea of publishing a catalog frightened me. I sat down at my prehistoric (CP/M) Osborne computer and started sorting all the data that were then available. There were not many. Some guidance came from study group member George V. H. Godin, editor of the *Durland Standard Plate Number Catalog*, who pointed to the information available in the plate-activity reports of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

The first edition, a 36-page booklet printed on an Okidata daisy-wheel printer, was published in an edition of 100. I had planned to charge \$5, but my wife talked me into asking \$10.

The first, very faulty printing—called *Catalog of Plate Number Coils*—sold out in weeks, and another 250 copies were printed (with corrections).

Although the cover proclaimed it as a publication of the study group, all the work in it was done by me.

In addition to providing the basic BEP data on plate numbers, plate pairings, impression totals, and press dates, there was little more than averaging of dealers' price lists.

The catalog brought some attention to the study group and more collectors were invited to join. But writing and printing the occasional round-robin was becoming more and more difficult. It was not possible to open the study group to all applicants.

One member never replied to any mail. Another apologized that he had climbed Mt. Everest, been to the North Pole, and gone on safari in Africa; he simply had no time for the group. So, the study group was limited to 20 members and as people willing to work were invited, those who were merely spectators were asked to resign. A critic dubbed the group "EsraTi's Chosen Twenty."

And, even though there was a constant stream of inquiries from people wishing to join, putting out the internal round-robin simply could not be expanded.

Myron Hill hit me with another suggestion: Why not expand the round-robin into a regular publication, available to non-members? This resulted in the birth in 1986 of *The Plate Number*, also produced on the Osborne and the daisy wheel.

The limitations of the Osborne were all too evident in trying to publish a bimonthly magazine. The greatest headache was in attempting to run copy in two columns. Additionally, I was limited to one ugly computer font, for body copy as well as headlines. Most embarrassing for someone who had spent a professional lifetime as an editor was the dreadful appearance of the thing.

I stepped up to an Apple Computer *Macintosh Plus* with a 20-megabyte hard drive and a *LaserWriter Plus*. But even that computer was not up to the tasks I called on it to do.

The third edition of the Catalog was published on the Mac, using *ReadySetGo!* 1.0 page-layout software. This was not an attempt to economize over the more widely known *Pagemaker*

software, which, at that time, lacked a word processor and had many other drawbacks.

By then, members of the study group were urged to contribute their specialized knowledge in publishing the catalog. Wayne L. Youngblood contributed illustrations of constant plate varieties and was paid royalties on sales. Larry G. Haynes made up a chart of available Cottrell Press precancel-gap positions and provided a chart of relative scarcity for the various precancel-gap locations. D. John Shultz drew a chart to show how precancel-gap positions are named. A. S. Cibulskas threw in what he knew about stamps with full plate numbers on top or no plate numbers at all. Dr. John Greenwood estimated prices for all known imperforate strips. Ken Lawrence provided prices for used singles and data on first-day covers.

The third edition was a primitive piece of publishing. It was the first done on the Mac, which allowed the scanning in of Youngblood's illustrations, but it presented new problems.

The policy adopted on the third edition was followed on all later editions. After printing out one early draft, portions of this were sent out to members of the study group for correction, addition, and criticism. The changes were then made before the final printout was taken to a commercial printer for duplication. But in 1987, I managed to lose (in the computer) most of the fixes suggested by Ken Lawrence, and the catalog went to bed with some incorrect information.

The price of the catalog has climbed steadily as cost of production climbed with more pages. The suggested retail price for the 1991 edition is \$17.50. I financed part of the printing cost by making a pre-publication offer at \$16. In previous years, the pre-publication offer also included a sweepstakes, in which free subscriptions to *The Plate Number* were given as prizes.

Included in the cost of 1991 production was a whole new computer system (a *Macintosh SE-30* with 5 megabytes of RAM), new software (*Design Studio 2.0* to replace *ReadySetGo!* 4.5a), and a full-page monitor, finally overcoming the *Macintosh*'s miserable small screen.

All contributors have always been reimbursed for all costs they bore in putting the catalog together. Some also received other honoraria.

The fourth edition had a change of name to its title because a reader of *The Plate Number* noted that library card catalogs were full of cards beginning with the word "catalog." Putting the subject first, he said, would make it easier to find. (But the catalog is not available in most philatelic libraries. The American Philatelic Research Library has never ordered a copy. The only libraries that have it appear to be the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the University of Texas at Dallas, the Oregon Stamp Society, and the Philatelic Library at Munich, Germany.)

The fourth edition also added the artwork of Richard J. Nazar. That was lucky because Wayne Youngblood went to work for *Linn's* and was soon barred from doing illustrations on the basis of that publication's conflict-of-interest rules. I paid Youngblood a lump sum to buy his copyright.

Illustrations were always a problem. At first, I took Youngblood's drawings to a computer friend who charged me

\$50 an hour for scanning them. He raised the price to \$75 a year later. I then bought a *LightningScan* scanner of my own.

Scanners are no panacea. The bit-mapped images produced on them are seldom clean enough to publish. They need a great amount of pixel-by-pixel cleaning up using a drawing diagram. (I use *SuperPaint 2.0*.)

Among other things, scanned images usually lack straight edges of equal width. They add unwanted pixels and leave out wanted ones. Every scanned image requires some amount of laborious work to make it fit to print.

The 1991 catalog was printed in three stages. In the first stage, I sent out portions to co-workers. Those on the editing committee got the entire manuscript. Their work was incorporated into the second draft, which went out only to the editing committee.

The third and final draft also went to members of the pricing committee (dealers Al Haake and Tom Maeder). For his special knowledge of precancel-gaps, Dr. Robert Rabino-witz, a non-member of the study group, was asked to go over those prices and the scarcity tables dealing with precancel-gaps.

As I left the editorship, the study group had 22 members. But the membership had changed quite a bit from the original.

Calvin V. Whitsel, a stock broker who uses technical analysis, sold all his PNCs after AMERIPEX because his charts told him they had hit a "double top." He resigned from the group.

George Godin quit collecting recent U.S. stamps and also resigned. Part of his reason for stopping his U.S. collection in the mid-1980s was that BEP plate-activity reports were full of errors.

Thom E. Wheeler, a valued member of the original editing committee, had to resign because of the time he had to devote to his labor union.

There have always been more applicants than slots, even with the rule that one must work to join the group. Some members had to be given leaves of absence while they took care of personal matters or business. Scott F. Smith is currently on leave at Little America and Larry G. Haynes has spent two years in Europe with an international oil company.

The current catalog is not even a ghost of the original. It is a concise encyclopedia of its subject, listing every collectable aspect of PNCs, even those with tiny followings.

Among the subjects covered for each and every strip are: all production data, paper types, tagging characteristics and tagging breaks, constant plate and precancel mat varieties, pairing on press with other plate numbers, first-day covers, earliest known usage, and precancel-gap positions.

Unprecanceled PNCs are priced as mint singles, pairs, strips of three, and strips of five; used singles, and, in a few instances, as commercial covers, earliest-known-use-covers, or covers with purple machine cancels. Precanceled PNCs are priced as singles, strips of three, strips of five, and as long strips if the precancel-gap falls outside the strip of five.

In addition, appendices present scarcity tables for many of these topics and the most complete set of postal rate charts available for all mail on which coil stamps are used.

The BEP production data deserve one comment. Although

they are basically the information published by the Postal Service based on monthly reports from BEP, they have had to be edited. To point to only one major headache, the reports said no stamps from Plate 4 of the 17¢ Electric Auto had ever been printed, even though BEP reported sending that plate to press five different times. The stamps are listed and priced.

The study group had to reconstruct the printing histories of the 20¢ Fire Pumper, the 2¢ Locomotive, the 17¢ Electric Auto, and the 9.3¢ Mail Wagon stamps. All this information is included in the catalog.

In the process, the study group has begun studies of the defunct Cottrell presses, a project that is continuing.

The next edition of the catalog will be published by Nazar. It will be up to him to issue invitations for membership in the study group. □

Tallying the Membership Poll

By Ken Lawrence

With the Second Quarter issue we included not only a ballot for officers, but also a membership questionnaire. Diana Manchester has tallied the results and forwarded them to the officers and Council. There was no category for which the negatives outweigh the positives, or even came close, even though this type of poll usually elicits disproportionately critical responses.

These are the totals as of the end of September, from 55 returns:

Our most popular feature is Book Reviews: 40 like them, whereas only 3 don't. Next in order of popularity is Letters to the Editor, but they are more contentious—28 for them, 14 against, and two checked both! Continuing down in order,

	Pro	Con
Graphics and Photography Tips	27	8
Layout Tips	26	8
Literature Exhibition News & Comments	24	6
Production Tips	24	8
Watching the Weeklies	22	9
Editor's Column	21	10
Computer Helps	21	12
President's Column	19	11
Publisher's Comments	18	8
Pick of the Litter-ature Awards	17	6

Besides the multiple-choice checklists, space was provided for additional comments (see sidebar, facing page). The most useful are those that made specific suggestions and offers to write, which I shall eagerly pursue.

Since we are all writers, no one will be surprised by these results, or the diversity they express. Diana has done us all a wonderful service in eliciting and recording our collective feelings about where we've been, where we ought to go in the future, and how to get there. Thanks, Diana! □

Manuscripts, Anyone?

Though Ken enjoys popular support from letters and articles sent him for *The Philatelic Communicator*, he can always use a wider range from which to choose.

Send him your writings, letters, ideas. j.f.f. □

Your Comments

"Basically, I like just about everything."

"I read each issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* from cover to cover, with the same sense of guilty pleasure that results from reading *People* magazine."

"Ken Lawrence consistently comes up with interesting ideas. I want to see more of them!"

"Opinion pieces are important but should be equally balanced with 'how to' articles."

"I would like to see criticisms put in a more positive way. Dump the personal attacks."

"Too much politics and not enough writing improvement articles."

"The repartee between writers, readers, and others that appears so regularly is for the birds. Too much personality spoils an otherwise good publication."

"Get rid of the editor!"

"Although I do enjoy reading all the 'ranting' between letter writers, I would like to see some more simple techniques and ideas for improving our writing skills and our editing."

"The editor is a terrific talent—and a volunteer—but he shouldn't be making the rules."

"[I don't like] back-and-forth back biting in letters."

"I don't know what [the purpose] is supposed to be but the *PC* as it is now is one of the few pieces of philatelic mail that I enjoy reading."

"[The *PC*] should *not* be used to deal with subjects not related to writers and writers' problems. (Example—recent 'exposé' of USPS stamp printing."

"As much as I believe in the autonomy of an editor, Ken Lawrence is a loose cannon whose abuse of his position seems to be unchecked."

"The *PC* has changed under the new editor. I enjoyed those issues edited by Barbara Mueller, but issues edited by Ken Lawrence seem to cover the philatelic scene more comprehensively. I'm glad the open letter to Frank and Morison was printed."

"Issue just received the best ever, which is a great compliment in view of some past ones. A pity the contents are confined to our small group."

"I strongly protest the editor's tone (and sometimes the terms used) to criticize people."

"I read *all* of it! Don't stop!"

"[The purpose] is not to castigate the USPS or writers, editors, and publishers that the editor happens to dislike. That sort of stuff is boring and gross."

"What on earth was the [Second Quarter] insert? I am not paying dues for such garbage, and it has no place in the *PC*."

"The level of invective in recent issues is outrageous."

"I enjoy reading about controversy, but would like the name-calling reduced. Let us know who the scum are, give us the reasons, let us call them sh-heads if we wish!"

"[I don't like] the incessant fighting between writers!"

"A bit more charitable approach to some comments would be better for the hobby. There are of course cases where stirring things up is an absolute necessity. That open letter sure brought attention to the problems."

"Too often the discussion seems to be what is or is not appropriate to include in the *PC*."

"The recent spate of differences are not of interest to the majority."

"I am tired of these endless, vituperative attacks directed at individuals. If content of the *PC* does not change, my resignation will be forthcoming."

"Strong self image notwithstanding I would hesitate to write for *PC*, fearing fifty vitriolic attacks."

"I'm glad most philatelic writers I know are nicer than most of the diatribers in *PC*."

"Our editor seems to favor some people in giving out books and does too much of the reviewing himself. Too many letters from the favored few. Too much everything from them."

"Controversy is fine, but why must [Ken Lawrence] put down many of his fellow writers?"

"The *PC* seems to have become a philatelic op-ed vehicle, much needed. Perhaps in time it'll evolve a critical intelligence."

"I see the Writers Unit as embattled, but still maintaining a high profile, and consists of many good things."

"Ken should continue to sound off, but let this be in separate articles that rely on 'I' rather than 'we.' Speaking through the editor's column, he implies we all agree."

"It's gettin' better!"

"Too much space devoted to critical letters. Concentrate on reviewing the publications that do well in exhibitions as examples for others."

"The insert was insulting in very poor taste, and, if satire, even worse."

"I strongly disagree with Ken Lawrence's stewardship of the *PC*. His juvenile name-calling and personal attacks do nothing for the Writers Unit or philately in general."

"I'll give the *PC* another year to return to its former objective to meet the real purpose of the Writers Unit."

"It is good as it is."

"Why don't you call it the *Ken Lawrence Communicator* or perhaps *The Philatelic Ken Lawrence*?"

"I simply state that I think the *PC* is top notch."

"I consider name-calling to be wholly out of place in the *PC* or any other group publication. I am not a fan of Ken Lawrence or Mark Kellner. Joe Frye deserves many thanks for the job he does in producing *PC*."

"Don't be afraid of controversy. That's what the *PC* is there for."

"I read *everything* from cover to cover when I receive the *PC*. It appears to travel in the direction of controversy and material for professional writers. Some of us are not 'professionals,' but we are editing and look forward to tips to improve our writing and production."

"Complaints about the number of stamps is a topic for the lay press and other society journals. Discussion of attempts at censorship about writing or collecting are appropriate. Discussion of possible immoral, unethical, or fraudulent contracting practices of the USPS should be done in another forum." □

When Is It Its and When Is It It's?

By Bob de Violini

In this era of automatic on-line dictionaries, the misuse of it's for its, and vice versa, unfortunately continues. So far, there is not a program that spots misused homonyms—words that sound the same, but are spelled differently and have

different meanings—though some grammar checkers will ask if that is what you really wanted to say.

We all know stationery/stationary; right/write; there/their; principle/principal; capitol/capital; raze/raise; sheer/shear; threw/through; and of course too/to/two; among many others. But from what I've seen in philatelic and computer club

literature, the confusion about its and it's still reigns/rains supreme.

A recent column of the *San Francisco Chronicle's* Herb Caen provides the following creation from Jessica Mitford.

When is it its? When it's not it is.

When is it it's? When it is it is.

And though neither Caen nor Mitford include it, it is never its'.

CEYLON It's Postal History 1914 - 1919

A newsman once related to me his teaching from an editor when he was starting out in the game: use it's only when you want to say it is. Any other use is wrong. And that's what I use as a means of confirming that I have it right.

As an appendix to the above, I'm sure all of you have noticed the proliferation of hand-drawn signs in store fronts, roadside stands, *etc.*, that use apostrophe s to make a plural: "watermelon's 10¢ a lb." for instance. Another abomination upon the English language. □

Inspiration and Productivity

By Dale Speirs

John Hotchner's recent columns on twenty secrets of inspiration (*PC*, Third Quarter 1991) and high productivity (Second Quarter 1988) have inspired me to produce this brief note on how I do it.

I am not as prolific a writer as Hotchner (is anyone but Herst?) but do publish frequently in a variety of periodicals, whether philatelic, horticultural (my profession), science fiction, and aquarium-keeping (my other hobbies), as well as editing two bulletins.

I never read or view anything in my life without thinking if it might make a possible story. People who complain that they can't come up with ideas just aren't trying. Ideas are all around us.

Seldom a day goes by that I don't clip at least one article out of a newspaper and put it in my "Things to do" file as a possible future article. Sometimes I can use the idea immediately, and sometimes it will sit in the file for years before being used. Every so often, I sort through the file to see what could be used.

Right now my files contain the following items:

- You've probably heard the story about how a contractor saved money by shipping bricks through the post office because the postage on each brick was cheaper than hiring a freight company. Well, that story has happened at least twice; I have newspaper clippings showing that it was done in Vernal, Utah, in 1916, and in Anchorage, Alaska, in 1988.

- Whenever a mail embargo is declared because a country is at war or suffering a postal strike, I immediately make up covers addressed to fictitious persons in that country. The covers will be returned by the post office with markings or letters of explanation. Right now, I have returned covers from Liberia, Kuwait, Iraq, and Lebanon. They'll make a story someday when I need a topic.

- Optical Character Reader markings have recently appeared on U.S. mail, printed across the upper right corner of the envelope. I get mail almost daily from one company in Pittsburgh, and those covers have a wide variety of OCR markings on them. When I get a stack thick enough, they'll make an article.

- My mother's family is Finnish; on her grandparents's passports are various Finnish revenue stamps. If I ever get around to researching these non-Scott stamps then I'll have a story.

If you get into the habit of always thinking "How can I get an article out of this?", you'll be pleasantly surprised how many articles you do come up with. I always carry a pen and notebook with me to jot down ideas in case I forget.

High productivity? People occasionally ask me how I find the time to do everything. I always reply with the truth, "I don't have a television set," and I always get a laugh from them at this answer. It is a sad commentary on our society. Turn off your tv and you'll be amazed at how much you can get done. It is possible to get by in life without watching the ball game or the Simpsons. Trust me on this one.

A change is as good as a rest, as the saying goes. If I bog down on an article, I set it aside and do something else. The article may be set aside for a few minutes while I take out the garbage, or it may be several years before I come back to it. I find I cannot write well unless I am genuinely excited; if I have to force myself, the article suffers. By keeping numerous things on the go, I can switch around from one interest to another, and eventually return to the original article all rarin' to go. □

Optical Scanners

By Bob Rawlins

Last week, at this writing, I acquired a new toy—an optical character reader more commonly called a scanner—a Hewlett-Packard *ScanJet*, which is opening new horizons for me as editor of the *Universal Ship Cancellation Society Log*, a monthly newsletter for naval cover collectors.

There are two types of scanners on the market that I know about, a hand held scanner which you roll over the image or text to be copied and a flatbed which will scan a full legal sized sheet in one fell swoop.

The flatbeds now come with increasing sensitivity and even

color capability, all, of course, at a price to match capability. Hand held scanners are reasonably priced, but they are also limited in the size of the image they can reproduce.

Flatbeds are a major purchase for most of us. I lucked out and bought my desktop editor's scanner when she decided to move up. Two programs, *OmniPage Professional*, which is best for text, and *HP Scan Gallery*, which is preferred for images, came as part of my deal.

For those not acquainted with this technology, a scanner is a method of electronically transferring an image (picture) or text to computer memory. Actually, the scanner is more like a photocopy machine in that it merely copies the image/text and the software program processes the information into computer speak.

Early software programs did a so-so job transferring text; current programs are a whiz in that respect. The scanner can also be used in reverse to reproduce a photocopy of an image created on the computer screen.

I first became aware of the capabilities of a scanner when my desktop editor gave me a demonstration of her new machine. We had been updating our *USCS Postmark Catalog* by reprinting a section at a time using standard typesetting techniques.

That procedure has proven so laborious and time consuming that a massive update was in order to bring the catalog current. We wanted to put the entire catalog on a computer base for ease in updating but were deterred by the time, effort and cost to type thousands upon thousands of entries, mostly numbers.

Not to worry, said my desktop editor, just scan the information into computer memory. And so we did, with the whole project completed in a month and at a very reasonable cost. When this machine became available at a cost within my budget, I jumped on it.

The scanner is easy to operate: Lift the protective cover and lay the document face down on the glass just as though operating a photo copier.

It is the software program that proves the hurdle to negotiate. I failed to mention earlier that one must have a *Windows* capability, with a mouse and 4 MB RAM to use the scanner, which means a 386SX or better processor. So, if you have a 286 or less capability and never intend to upgrade, you may want to stop right here and jump to the next article.

I don't yet have a laser printer so there is no use my trying to scan images. But, to copy a page of text, I call up *OmniPage* and click on the Process block which gives me a screen of options to consider.

I can choose a single or multiple page document, automatically discern column structure or select a single column from a document and I can recognize an entire document as a single text or just scan portions of a printed page.

I can vary contrast and brightness settings depending on the quality of the document in order to produce the best computer copy. And finally, I can select "save" options which means I can process the scanned copy within *OmniPage* or automatically transfer it into my word processor (*WordPerfect 5.0*) for editing and spell checking.

My first session with the scanner ended in computer

lockup and major frustration on my part because the demonstration had gone well after we had loaded the programs.

The next day, after a phone review session with my desktop editor—oh yes, she forgot to tell me about a quirk or two in the program—I tried again and, *voila*, the document at hand flashed on the screen. I scrolled through it for a quick check, then completed the editing and printed the page all without pencil touching the page.

My first few sessions clearly show that the scanned product is directly related to the quality of the *typed* copy. (No, the text scanning program will not work with a hand written or hand printed manuscript, no matter how neat, but the image program should.)

A double spaced page of clean, sharp 10-pitch courier reproduced exactly as typed, no errors whatsoever. But a double spaced page of less clean 12-pitch elite type did not do nearly as well. The scanned copy had lots of errors, perhaps one word in ten, with both tildes or blanks where there should have been a letter. But that error rate can probably be improved by selecting optimum brightness and contrast options. I need to work on that.

The advantage of the scanner is a definite saving in time over retyping a page into computer memory. I have good speed, but I tend to drag my fingers over the keyboard so I am not terribly accurate. The scanner solves that problem and I have only the writer's typos and errors, not my own, to contend with when I begin editing on the screen.

My desktop editor estimates that scanning saves 30 percent of her time; I estimate it will save me 50 percent or even more.

With a 20-page, average, monthly newsletter, I receive a good stack of typed copy every 30 days. I also have several hundred pages of a catalog saved years ago on a word processor disk which is not compatible with my IBM clone. I dreaded the thought of having to retype those pages when I start revising that manual; fortunately, now I won't have to do that. I'll just scan the pages into memory.

A scanner is not for everyone or within everyone's means. But, depending on your potential use of such equipment, it might be something to add to your want list. I'll bet one would save Joe Frye a peck of time and effort. □

Fonts, Grammar Checkers, and *PageMaker*

By Bob de Violini

With a cover headline reading, "You Can't Have Too Many Fonts," the September 24, 1991, issue of *PC Magazine* contains several items of interest to writers, publishers, and editors. This is an issue of extended use to people in our field, but unfortunately it will probably be off-sale by the time this article appears in print. Perhaps a friend of yours, or your local PC users group library, will have a copy available for you to examine and learn from.

The font article is really about scalable fonts for the personal computer, and bears the subtitle, "Beyond Times and Helvetica," the two basic fonts that come with most laser printers. The article's sidebars provide a lot of useful information. One illustrates what some typographers' terms

mean—things like counter, bracket, x-height, terminal, crossbar and cross stroke, and shoulder line.

Another looks at different versions of the Garamond font coming from Linotype Hell, Monotype, Adobe Systems, Stempel, and ITC, among others. (A point of history: The first type foundry was established in France during the 16th century by Claude Garamond. The Garamond typeface is derived from designs from that era.) Other pages show samplings from the font libraries of these companies, and others. Some are more successful than others, and the article points out the good and bad points of each group.

The second article of interest to computer-using writers deals with spell-checkers, style and grammar-checkers, dictionaries, and thesauri, and packages of one or more of these aids. There are several good choices available in each category, and you need to read the evaluations to see which is best-suited to your style and preferences.

The review of the new Aldus *PageMaker 4.0 for Windows* describes the numerous areas of improvement it has undergone in this edition, and its continued friendliness. The article notes that *Ventura Publisher* (*PageMaker*'s chief competitor) has features that are useful in preparing complex documents such as technical manuals, but that *PageMaker* is fine for most all business publications, newsletters, and the like, and the ease of use of this program's features is a major plus. Older versions could not handle long documents, but *PageMaker 4.0* will let you prepare tomes of up to 999 pages, if you are of that mind.

The new story editor and spell-checker, along with a table

editor, all add to its power. It also handles color and color separations. You can select colors for text or graphics using the RGB (red-green-blue), HSL (hue-saturation-lightness), or CMYK (cyan-magenta-yellow-black) models, as well as PMS, the Pantone Matching System, to describe the desired colors.

There is a lot more detail in all these articles than I can, or want to, go into here. I just wanted to make PC users aware of the bounty of information available in this one issue of the magazine. □

Pick of the Litterature Award VIII

By Ken Lawrence

Oliver C. Atchison, editor of *The Dispatcher*, is my choice for this quarter's award. Although literature exhibition juries are not generous to his publication, I'm sure that members of the Casey Jones Rail Road Unit of the American Topical Association enjoy every issue. That's because *The Dispatcher* is for railroad aficionados who collect stamps as a way of augmenting their love for trains, and Atchison keeps them primed with first-rate railroad lore that brings each train stamp to life.

Even though I don't collect the topic, I find Atchison's enthusiasm for his subject to be infectious. If only we could propagate this writing style in the hobby's mainstream, we might solve some of our most vexing outreach problems. In other words, maybe the lesson we can learn from his writing is that what we need is not more exhortations to collect stamps, but more examples of how stamp collecting enriches the broader interests that we share with others. □

Letters

From Les Winick:

Your "review" in the PC on the Salm Foundation Report is so loaded with inaccuracies and misstatements that it is difficult to know where to begin a critique of what you wrote. I decided to go with a step-by-step approach using your very own words.

● "... least-understood piece of philatelic literature published in 1991." Since we distributed 4,500 copies of the report and *did not receive a single letter* requesting further information, perhaps it is you who have the problem understanding the English language. We have received literally dozens of compliments and contributions from readers who have received the report.

● "... the ambiguity of the report ..." We felt it was straightforward and told the facts. Perhaps you are ambiguous in not explaining what you mean.

● "... today's watchword is 'acid free.'" Sorry, we can't accept that. How about an "acid free" hinge that is made of acid free paper, but the adhesive is

acidic?

● "... the Salm Foundation addressed the area least likely to cause problems—album pages." *Bull!* Before we started testing, we quizzed many dealers as to which philatelic product caused the most problems for collectors. Album pages came out on top with each firm. The auctioneers were the most vehement, detailing countless cases of pages in vaults where the acid caused problems with stamps and covers attached to the page. The fact that out of 64 pages tested, only 23 were alkaline proves our concern in testing pages first.

● "... text that purports to evaluate the results ..." The text was taken from reports of 18 different conservation groups, submitted to several for critique and approved as written in the report. But perhaps Ken Lawrence knows better than the U.S. Bureau of Standards, U.S. National Archives, Library of Congress, Canadian Conservation Institute, American Library Association, American National Standards Institute, Society of American Archivists, Alkaline Advocate, Bavarian State Library in Munich, plus

dozens of manuscripts.

● "... the tests are not truly scientific ..." The tests are standard and approved by the National Bureau of Standards, American Chemical Society, and the Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry (TAPPI). The preservation departments of the Library of Congress and the U.S. National Archives knew of our testing methods and approved.

● "First, I'd set a limit of acceptable acidity—say pH 4.8 for an ordinary album and pH 5.8 for one of archival quality." The National Information Standards Organization now accepts pH 7.0. A new draft, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-199X, Proposed National Standard Permanence of Paper for Publications and Documents in Libraries and Archives, proposes a pH of 7.5. It has been approved by the 44 organizations in the group. Congratulations, Ken, you have contradicted every known standard set by every testing organization in the United States.

● "I'd prepare a standard solution approximating the acid pollutants of the North American big-city atmosphere that

would be expected to drop the pH of paper over time . . . " That's a bunch of baloney! Think of what you wrote. If you could achieve this feat, I'd nominate you for the Nobel Prize for statistical research.

● " . . . keeping the identity of the testing laboratory secret . . . " Guilty as charged. The commercial lab did not want to be bothered with phone calls from collectors asking about their individual pages or problems or wild schemes (such as yours in the "review"). One manufacturer called and screamed at me. Should I have let him call the lab? Four manufacturers listed in the report with acidic pages asked for the lab's name and were informed that we would advise their lab or paper source the name, address, and phone number of our lab. Not a single one requested this information. Incidentally, each of the four later told me that they are changing their paper source to non-acidic paper for album pages. We will test their new pages if and when they appear on the market.

● " . . . shunning recommendations of any sort, supposedly for legal reasons . . . " What do you mean "supposedly"? Our legal counsel said absolutely not to make recommendations. I have the honor of being the only *Linn's* columnist ever sued. We won, I was awarded a judgement and all I had to do was file suit in New York to get the money. It would have cost more in legal fees than the judgement. We have no desire to use up the Salm Foundation's money in legal counsel, despite your desire for sensationalism.

● " . . . low pH (acid) substrates may be as safe or safer than buffered alkaline for some stamps and covers . . . " Nothing like a half truth. Key words are "may be," "buffered alkaline," and "some stamps and covers." There are enough conditions in the one statement to sink of its own weight.

● "The worst paper pages are almost certain to be good for 20 years . . . " What scientific data can you use to back up this statement? What lab or source did you use? Why didn't you publish the name and address so your readers can check out your statement? Isn't it true that if an acidic postage stamp is placed on an alkaline page, the acid will migrate from the stamp to the page? How much is

this worth to a collector's estate?

There is some good information in your review, but it got lost when you mixed it in with a lengthy personal ego trip about your supposed scientific knowledge. I'll put my faith in today's research labs, rather than in Ken Lawrence. □

Les Winick is president of the Arthur Salm Foundation. □

From Leonard H. Hartmann:

I find Ken Lawrence's article "What Does the Salm Foundation Report Mean?" in the Third Quarter *Philatelic Communicator* objectionable in that it does not represent the competence I would expect from a professional journalist with a philatelic background. This is most annoying as I agree with the general thoughts of the article and the need for explanation.

The Salm Foundation Report No. 1 is believed to be accurate but does not fill the collector or scientific need in that the material is not fully interpreted or documented. Paper chemistry and archival properties are a most complex issue. Even a reasonable explanation of the meaning would cover several hundred pages. ASTM reference numbers could have been given to save space and confusion but to preserve the information for anyone that really wanted to get into it.

Naturally we object to Mr. Lawrence's remark " . . . the report is fraught with a potential for mischief, such as in Leonard Hartmann's July *American Philatelist* ad." Though this advertisement was intended as an "attention getter," we consider it both technically accurate and responsible to the needs of the collector and archivist.

Yes we agree the Salm report is poorly composed with respect to the intended reader. However, one must consider the fact that this is, perhaps, the first attempt in philately to get such information out to the collector. Because the foundation bears a considerable legal liability, some limitations should be taken into consideration when judging it.

The problem has been known for many years but no one has dared speak out! We know of one responsible journal that considered it "too hot to handle." One can easily understand why the foundation was not more explicit. I tried to obtain some details on the work from the

foundation and was not able to do so but I can understand and accept their position.

Lawrence's review is another matter. Though the apparent intent to put archival preservation in perspective for the collector is admirable, the mangling of facts and the ambiguous wording is not.

Our greatest objection to the wording is the apparent use of the word "paper" to apply to all paper when in reality there are numerous qualities of papers which have widely different needs and expectations for preservation.

Poor quality ground wood pulp paper has an extremely short life expectancy irrespective of the preservation, while 100 percent cotton fiber paper, which is close to neutral with a proper buffer, can easily be expected to last over 500 years if treated in a responsible manner.

Between these two extremes are numerous intermediate papers. Some are excellent; others we have a poor opinion of.

Lawrence noted an August 1971 article by John Alden in *The American Philatelist* as saying that "paper ages the equivalent of 26 years in one hour at 100 degrees (Fahrenheit)." This article actually states "three days of 100° (Fahrenheit) temperature affect paper as much as 26 years of normal temperature." Besides the major time difference, a factor of 72, the most important words "as much" were omitted.

Lawrence did not give the Alden remark an exact quote, but the deliberate change in fact is not proper. The words "as much" are extremely important as poor quality paper ages much more quickly than quality paper. We use the words quality paper as a catchall to imply a concept. *The Wall Street Journal* exposed to Kentucky sun in August, mid 90°F and about 85 percent relative humidity is significantly discolored in six hours while we have paper from the mid 1400s which appears to show no more age.

With respect to gum, Lawrence states that it should be removed but that "no stamp collector would treat any valuable stamp that way." That is certainly not true, though as a generality it is. We emphatically agree that gum should be removed for preservation, for both chemical and structural reasons.

I have soaked gum from several VF large blocks of CSA lithographs. We know of one major private collection on which this practice has been carried out for over 50 years. Blocks and sheets of early U.S. 20th century stamps from which the gum was removed soon after issue are far fresher today than their counterparts with original gum. Sheets of adhesives from the 1850s whose gum was removed in the 1920s look better today than their counterparts with original gum.

Lawrence chided us for promoting our 100 percent rag fiber instead of "acid free." Our paper is essentially neutral and was so confirmed by the Arthur Salm report. We refuse to use the term "acid free" as this is on a par with such buzz words of past generations as "poly-unsaturated"—they sound good but have no technical reality.

One can have "acid free" or neutral pH paper which is not time stable and quite destructive. One could take newsprint pulp and make it "acid free" but I still would not use it near a scarce stamps as the potential for acid production is still in the paper. Our 100 percent fiber rag paper is essentially neutral pH, and we could say "acid free" but we prefer not to!

The concept of pH can be easily demonstrated in any high school science lab. Accurate readings on various materials are by no means the simple techniques that Lawrence implies and surmises. Readings of 0.01 pH can be obtained and repeated for a number of specialized areas but they require a chemist skilled in the techniques of the specific field such as paper technology.

Obtaining and maintaining pH reference samples is a major problem. Pure water is frequently not neutral and high purity de-ionized water can be fairly acid. In a companion article to the above, Lawrence wrote that it was over 20 years since he was employed as an analytical chemist. Much has happened over the last 20 years; many of us remember when asbestos was considered the best!

We applaud Lawrence's attempt to bring reality to problems of archival preservation but feel he missed the mark more than he hit it. It is not a subject that can be brought into perspective in a few pages. Chemically different stamps and covers have different needs, plus there

are major economic and convenience considerations.

I know this rebuttal has not really clarified the problem but I hope that we have brought out that it is a complex matter that deserves serious consideration by responsible scientists and writers. □

From A. Ben David:

You will have seen in my recent World Philatelic Congress of Israel, Holy Land, Judaica Societies newsletter that I have published the First Report of the Salm Foundation.

I did not realize the complications until I read your article in *The Philatelic Communicator*. The "How to Test Stamp Products Scientifically" was very impressive.

Do I have your permission to reprint your article in our next newsletter? □

I have freely granted editors permission to reprint the review, but I have asked them to correct the mistake Leonard Hartmann caught in my reference to John Alden's 1971 article. □

From Mark A. Kellner:

I am coming to the opinion that the back-and-forth about the USPS, while valid, useful, and even interesting, is obscuring another role *The Philatelic Communicator* can play. That is the role of a stimulator of philatelic thought. If our hobby is to survive, then we have to start thinking about its survival.

For example, there are valid questions about the purpose a study group newsletter should play, and the PC is one place where that debate can take place. Ditto for the Greg Manning debate over the Scott catalog. And while we have debated the question of the death of stamp columns in the general press, I've not noticed any great discussion of the remedies or alternatives that might bring more people into the hobby.

I would, then, respectfully urge you to seek and publish such think pieces. By so doing, you can make a great contribution to the future of the hobby. □

From Terence Hines (to Joe Frye):

I want to let you know what a great job you're doing with the production and mailing of the PC. I used to edit the *State Revenue Newsletter* and the *Modern Postal History Journal*, and mail the

MPHJ (which I still do) so I know how much trouble something as seemingly easy as "production and mailing" can be!

In Al Starkweather's letter in the Third Quarter issue he made a suggestion that I think is not at all a good idea. He likes individual issues of journals to start with page 1 with each issue.

Contrary to what he says, this does not make the contents easier to index. Such pagination, in fact, makes for real problems in terms of the retrieval of information from a run of journals. With page numbers starting anew with each issue, there is much room for error in bibliographic citations and indexes. One doesn't know, for example, which issue an article that spans "pages 4-9" is in.

If the journal is published monthly, one will have to search through an average of six individual issues before getting the correct set of pages 4-9. With pages running through the entire volume, one is in no doubt of which set of pages 4-9 one is looking for—there is only one.

In standard bibliographic references, one includes the year, volume and page numbers of the article being cited. This gives enough redundancy so that even if one piece of information is left out, the article can be found.

This would not be the case if each issue was paged anew. Please don't change the way the PC is paged. □

From Robert L. Maurer (to Joe Frye):

So nobody writes to you. That is bad, because I think that you are the real power of *The Philatelic Communicator*.

All the editing, complaining, back-biting, and good stuff are fine, but until you put it together and mail it out it signifies nothing. So there!

The letter you received from Al Starkweather has some interesting points. The Needleman garbage (surely not your fault) was a waste of space and your valuable time. It wasn't funny the first time I saw it nor when it appeared in PC.

His next comment, about pagination, is the one that caught my attention. There is *no other way* to number pages than by volume. Our new president, Charles Peterson, will remember the horrible task it was when I submitted an index for the complete run of *The Booklet* for publication in *The Philatelic Literature Review*.

Harry Moskovitz published *The Booklet* nearly single-handedly for many of its nearly 40 years (1944-1981). He followed the lead of the first editor, Walter R. Hoffman, who numbered each issue from page 1. So the index had to cite volume, issue, and page for each entry. Doing that is a thankless task, I found out the

hard way. I suspect that the philatelic bibliography project at APRL will not be overjoyed to receive materials that have to have that much stuff for each entry.

I see no need for illustrations in *PC*. This minority reader (if I am) is looking for information about writing, not pictures. I like the two-column format. If it

were three dinky columns I'd find it difficult to read. Four columns? *Oy weh!*

This is my feedback, Joe, for what it is worth. I have no computer programs to write about, just a simple, dedicated word processor. My views do differ from Al Starkweather's and I submit them as a mild protest before any changes occur. □

Reviews

In Congress Assembled

By Charles J. Peterson

The Congress Book, 1991, 57th edition, edited by Michel Forand. 7½ by 10¼ inches, v+182 pages, hard cover, well illustrated. ISBN 0-929333-16-0. From the American Philatelic Congress, c/o Dr. Russell V. Skavaryl, 222 East Torrence Road, Columbus, OH 43214-3834.

The *Congress Book* is our yearly opportunity to get a solid compendium of reference articles on a diversity of philatelic subjects. Of course, to paraphrase Orwell, some editions are more equal than others. This 1991 anthology has nine contributions.

The best read (but essentially non-philatelic) is the "episode in historical philately" involving George Nesbitt and Vice-President Schuyler Colfax in an 1870s parallel to the Spiro Agnew affair, by Barbara Mueller. The most difficult read—due to the author's pedantic style—is Robert Dalton Harris's examination of the impact of prepaid replies. Arthur Groton deserves a special prize for his precisely defined, meticulously planned and point-by-point illustrated treatment of postage rates and fees in British Palestine, December 1917 to September 1921.

Haitian philatelic interests are addressed by Bud Sellers (designs, production and use of the 1924 definitives) and Peter Jeannopoulos (the 1891 "ten master" proof sheet, and its plating characteristics—an incisive piece of original research). Janusz Piekut, a stalwart of the Lodz, Poland, postal history group, presents an interesting report on Polish offices in Byelorussia and the Ukraine, 1919-20, which unfortunately is undercut by the existence of highly significant material not known to the author in time to incorporate the information in his article. Varro Tyler's analysis of forgeries of the 1886 issue of Tolima is detailed, well-reasoned and (considering that they're listed as genuine in Scott) decidedly germane.

Robert Dickgeisser provides an interesting semi-specialized introduction to the U.S. 1¢ Pan-American stamp which can be commended to students of this issue as well as to anyone looking for a guide to specialization. Paul Blake has a similar introduction to the history and stamps of French Indochina; not so fresh and first-hand, perhaps, and with some minor but disconcerting (typographical?) errors [e.g., Governor "Richard" vice Richaud, "the end of 1938" vice "early 1938"].

These are all quite worth reading and retaining for future consultation; together, they make up a good *Congress Book*, albeit not a stellar one. It's human nature to attempt to use that

assessment for a comparison of Michel Forand with that doyenne of philatelic editors, Barbara Mueller, who preceded him.

That's only valid in part. The most important aspect of the editor's tasks is to get the copy in the door. Planning the general layout and thrust, worrying about a balanced mix of contents, cajoling authors, calculating the space left to fill and cajoling more authors—whether it's an annual or a monthly, this work starts well before the previous issue goes to bed. It's not possible to evaluate Forand on the content of this year's book . . . but next year he's on his own.

As far as technical matters are concerned, the 1991 book is as cleanly edited and produced as earlier ones. There's a case of close quotes where open quotes should be, an extraneous "the" in Peter Jeannopoulos' article, two blurred illustrations (out of focus?) in Bud Seller's piece, citing of *British Association of Palestine and Israel Philatelists* (the society) rather than *BAPIP Journal [Bulletin]* (the journal). That's all I saw in a one-time reading, which is pretty tight control. Even the bibliographic and reference notes have been carefully standardized.

There is one weak spot, however, which apparently escaped attention by Mr. Forand just as it frequently is overlooked by other editors: the *content*, not merely the form, of source identification. In this case, the problem shows up in sourcing of the contribution by Blake.

Considering the extent of philatelic sub-specialty data Blake provides (routes, rates, dates, quantities), citation of sources would appear to be mandatory. However, he gives only seven references, one of which is a standard non-philatelic history/geography/demography book; of the six philatelic listings, one is the current Scott standard catalog. Two others can be correlated readily with specific portions of the text (Tristant, on the Trans-Siberian postal route; Waugh and Luft on French military campaign/expedition markings). The reference to the 1922 issue of *L'Écho de la Timbrologie* is inaccurate, at least to the extent that his five-paragraph extract is in fact the English language translation of that original article which appeared in *Indochina Philatelist* in 1977.

That leaves two philatelic source acknowledgments. One is an *unpublished manuscript* by Desrousseaux, in the French Postal Museum, dealing with French mail and carriers in the Far East. Admittedly, Desrousseaux is a leading authority on the postal history of French Indochina, but why refer to an unpublished manuscript when the same author has provided extensive material available in the original French as well as in English translation?

Finally, Blake cites two specific pages, from two succes-

sive numbers of *Indochina Philatelist*, of Mendelssohn's specialized Indochina catalog. Since this is the only specialized source for the 11+ pages of detailed information on stamp issues from 1886 to 1936, the reader might expect this to be a comprehensive reference. However, the two Mendelssohn installments (even in their full extent of two and three pages, respectively) start with 1907 and only go to 1928. What's the basis of all that specialized information the author gives us? From additional pages of Mendelssohn's specialized catalog? Or from Stone or Bouvet or Durand or *Kohl Handbuch* or *Yvert*, none of which he mentions? And where does the detailed listing of perfins originate, what's its reliability, how dated is it?

If this appears to be overkill of a useful guide to collecting Indochina, please remember that this review is specifically aimed at a readership of philatelic authors, editors and publishers. Blake is a professional educator; I seriously doubt that he would accept this quality of sourcing if one of his students submitted it to him. Forand is the editor of a prestigious compendium; he should be aware of the responsibility for accurate and appropriate sourcing. You readers need to recognize that if it could happen to them, it could happen to you, unless you make checking of references second nature. □

Who Are All Those People on My Stamps?

By Barth Healey

Who's Who on U.S. Stamps by Richard Louis Thomas. 5½ by 8½ inches, soft cover, iv + 432 pages, ISBN 0-940403-42-0. Linn's Stamp News, P.O. Box 29, Sidney, OH 45365. \$14.95 postpaid. (Hardcover "library" edition \$30 postpaid.)

There are strong similarities in form between Dr. Thomas's collection of more than 400 potted biographies of stamp subjects and Varro Tyler's survey of the master forgers of the world, which was reviewed in Third Quarter PC: Both authors have set quite firm parameters for themselves, and have succeeded admirably in staying within those parameters.

Dr. Thomas (he's an M.D.) undertook to tell us something about every personality depicted on United States stamps (with a reservation I'll get to later), no easy task. Any one of us could put together a sentence or two on Dolley Madison and James Madison; but who was Helene Madison?

Just running through the G's, Clark Gable is easy, but Albert Gallatin is tough. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet won his fame through the "deaf rights" marches of the mid-1980s at the university in Washington that is named after him; but who was Bernardo de Galvez? (If you live in Galveston, Texas, you surely know.)

The result is an extremely handy book of biography that surely should be in the library of every junior stamp club, but in some ways it leaves any but the newest members of the hobby unsatisfied. For example, the four chaplains (Scott 956) are listed under C, and all four are included on one page in a text that begins "Not much is known about the lives . . ." Granting the paucity of biographical material on the four men, one sure would like to read more about the thrilling and tragic night that they sacrificed their lives to assure the safety of the men threatened in the sinking of the SS *Dorchester* in 1943.

The four chaplains also illustrate another problem: there

are no left-to-right designations, so it is impossible to know who's who. In correspondence that followed my mention of this problem in *The New York Times*, Dr. Thomas assured me this would be repaired in any subsequent edition.

We also had a rather spirited back-and-forth on what he could/should do about biographies of persons who appeared on stamps, if you will, inadvertently, e.g., the more than two dozen soldiers who have been identified as appearing on the 1945 Army stamp.

Dr. Thomas's view is that such persons are "nonentities," not the direct objects of the honor that issuance of a stamp was intended to bestow. I think I agree with him, but having been involved myself in identifying one of the soldiers on the Army stamp to supplement the vast research done by Albrow Gaul, my visceral response is that these real people offer a novelty and a truly personal connection with a stamp that is more attractive than yet another portrait of someone that the Postal Service says is important (Harriet Quimby, anyone?).

My suggestion, which Dr. Thomas has rejected, albeit with great good grace, is that the next edition of the book include a section ("Nonentities on Stamps," perhaps) on such living people on stamps, which could incorporate some of the work that John Hotchner and others have done in tracking down the models for the Aging Together stamp, for example, or the 1932 Arbor Day issue.

All that said, Dr. Thomas's book, like that of Varro Tyler, is a handsome, handy reference that should prove extremely useful to anyone writing casually about United States stamps. For anyone hoping to introduce new collectors to United States stamps, this book is crucial equipment. □

U.S. 19th Century Postage Due

By Alan Warren

Postage Due: The United States Large Numeral Postage Due Stamps 1879-1894, by George B. Arfken, 7 by 10¼ inches, xiii + 229 pages, illustrated, hardbound, 1991. ISBN 0-916675-03-3. Collectors Club of Chicago, 1029 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610. \$24.95 postpaid.

The Collectors Club of Chicago is to be congratulated on another excellent volume, the fourteenth in a series largely devoted to U.S. postal history.

Although France was the first country to issue a postage due adhesive stamp in 1859, Congress recognized the need for such stamps here in 1879. The second chapter, co-authored by Arfken and Lewis Kaufman, describes the various essays and proofs of the large numeral due stamps.

The next two chapters discuss the printing of the stamps with details on paper, ink shades, quantities issued, imperforates, specimens, plate flaws, and even the influence of this design on similar due stamps of Mexico and Australia.

The most important part of the book to my mind are the five chapters on usage of these stamps. The three chapters on domestic uses include unpaid and part paid, drop letters, advertised letters, postal cards, soldiers' and ship letters, overweight mail from Canada, third and fourth class usage, and misuse such as for prepayment.

An interesting section on bisects describes the use of postage due stamps on a cover with an invalid regular issue

bisect attempted for prepayment, and some philatelic covers with large numeral bisects which came from the Thomson, New York, post office in 1895.

Two chapters deal with usage of the dues on overseas mail such as stampless covers, insufficiently prepaid mail, overweight mail, and even a shipwrecked cover. U.P.U. "O" markings for invalid stamps, postal cards, and printed matter uprated to first class mail conclude the fascinating usages on mail from abroad. A variety of due markings (handstamps) are illustrated including the familiar U.P.U. "T" marks.

The concluding sections illustrate cancels on postage due stamps such as fancy cancels and even precancels. The illustrations throughout are excellent quality, as is the overall typography. Archival paper has been used, and a special frontispiece consists of a color photograph on Agfa paper which serves as a guide to shades, although the colors are not good enough for exact color matching.

Each chapter ends with an extensive bibliography. Thus this treatise brings together the important reference materials on the large numeral dues as well as new information. It would appear to be the definitive work on the subject, and is therefore highly recommended. □

Austria and Switzerland Specialized

By Jason Manchester

Michel-Österreich-Spezial-Katalog 1991. 6 by 7¼ inches, soft cover, 312 pages. ISBN 3-87858-330-3. Schwaneberger Verlag, Munich. Available for \$29.50 from Lighthouse Publications Inc., P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705.

Michel-Schweiz/Liechtenstein-Spezial-Katalog 1991. 6 by 7¼ inches, soft cover, 336 pages. ISBN 3-87858-331-1. Schwaneberger Verlag, Munich. Available for \$29.50 from Lighthouse Publications Inc., P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705.

All Michel catalogs are respected for being accurate and thorough. These specialized catalogs feature clear, clean, black-and-white pictures of most stamps. This makes locating a given stamp relatively easy.

Each stamp description includes date of issue, designer, engraver (where applicable), printing method, printer, number of stamps per sheet, perforation, watermark, and printing varieties. For Austria many plate errors also are included.

Both volumes feature separate sections for postage dues, officials, coils, booklets (and combinations), and Framas. Names and addresses of expertizers also are listed.

The Austria specialized catalog has listings for Lombardy-Venetia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Offices Abroad, and United Nations-Vienna issues. The special listings include: Black Prints, Commemorative Sheets, Court Stamps, Telegraph Stamps, Official Reprints, and Local Stamps.

Austrian postal history entries include: mixed frankings of German and Austrian stamps (1938), German stamps used in Austria (1938-45), German stamps used in the customs-free region of Kleinwalsertal and Jungholz (1945-50). The Austria specialized also has a bibliography containing 56 references.

Unfortunately the Switzerland/Liechtenstein specialized has no references at all. Under Switzerland these specialized areas are listed: Railroad Official Stamps, Telegraph Stamps, Semi

Official Airmail Stamps, Local (Hotel) Stamps, and Stamps of the Agencies of the League of Nations and of the United Nations. Also listed are U.N. stamps issued by the Geneva Office. For Liechtenstein, Michel includes a priced listing of all Austrian stamps which have Liechtenstein cancellations.

For users who need help with the German language, two aids are available. The publisher provides an English-language introduction for English-speaking readers. This was not included with either review copy but the U.S. agent for Michel can supply it.

A daily user who cannot read German, Austin Dulin, has composed an excellent guide to the use of the Germany Michel Specialized catalog, *German Postal Specialist*, Volume 39, pages 417-427 (1988). This guide is recommended for any Michel catalog.

For those who are looking for a detailed, comprehensive, well-organized, easy-to-use catalog for one of these countries, the Michel is an excellent choice. □

British Area Military Postal History

By Alan Warren

A Brief Outline of the British Army Postal Services During World War I by Charles Entwistle. 4¾ by 7 inches, stiff covers, stapled, 32 pages. £ 2.

Ceylon: It's [sic] Postal History 1914-1919. 6 by 8¼ inches, stiff covers, stapled, 12 pages. ISBN 1-872744-00-1. £ 2.

Civil Censorship in Australia and Dependencies 1939 to 1945 by J. C. Smith. 6 by 8¼ inches, stiff covers, stapled, 48 pages. ISBN 1-872744-03-6. £ 8.50.

History of the RAF Postal Service Overseas 1942-1957, Volume II by William Garard. 6 by 8¼ inches, stiff covers, stapled, 24 pages. ISBN 1-872744-02-8. £ 6.50.

All are available from Chavril Press, Bloomfield, Perth Road, Abernethy, Perth PH2 9LW, United Kingdom. Postage and packing to the U.S. is £ 1.50 regardless of the number of titles ordered.

A series of small pamphlets on various aspects of British postal services during World Wars I and II have come to hand from C & A Entwistle. The publisher, formerly of Stoke-on-Trent, specializes in military postal history and civilian censorship, but now uses the name Chavril Press to indicate that publishing is a separate entity from the postal history dealership.

At the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, Britain established free franking privileges for active forces personnel, dropping the one-penny concessionary rate in effect for over a century. The handling of soldiers' mail was the responsibility of the Royal Engineers - Special Reserve, Postal Section (R.E.P.S.).

In *A Brief Outline of the British Army Postal Services During World War I* the author describes and illustrates the Royal Navy cancellations and the seven basic types of Army/Field Post Office cancels.

The usages during various campaigns are discussed by area, viz. Belgium, France, Germany, the Dardanelles, Egypt, Italy, Salonica, and the APO in London. Eight types of military censor markings are shown, and the use of postal stationery concludes the slim volume.

A bibliography and index add to the usefulness of the booklet. The typeface and illustrations are very clear. The monograph provides the beginner with the essentials for starting a British World War I military postal history collection.

With *Ceylon: It's Postal History 1914-1919*, the publisher standardized on a size, format, and assigned ISBNs for the series. No author is indicated, but the editorial "we" leads me to believe it is again Charles Entwistle, although he does name three sources for much of the information presented.

Mail from Australian convoys and even New Zealand Expeditionary Forces passed through Ceylon and received Paquebot marks. Only one FPO (Australian) operated in Ceylon in World War I.

One censor mark for naval mail is described as well as civil censorship markings, including an unusual "Opened Under Martial Law" handstamp. The booklet concludes with a point system indicating value/rarity of the eleven marks described.

One of the annoying aspects of *Civil Censorship in Australia and Dependencies 1939 to 1945* is the lack of page numbers, which leads to a second annoyance, i.e., no index.

The booklet begins with a "Postscript" (!) announcing two more covers which came to light after the manuscript was completed.

Australia was divided into seven military districts during this period (Tasmania was No. 6). Military censorship prevailed in Papua, New Guinea, and the Solomons, until the Allies penetrated these areas.

Each military district is described separately with locations of the censor stations. For every district the author prepared a table with an illustration of each censor marking, a catalog number, dimensions of the mark, and a value scale ranging from A to F.

The tables are handwritten but clear and easy to read. The dates of usage for each mark are included. Markings from the territories of New Guinea, Cocos, Nauru, and Norfolk Island conclude the text. A useful bibliography appears at the end.

History of the RAF Postal Service Overseas 1942-1957, Volume II is a sequel to John Smith's book that appeared over thirty years ago, and deals with the RAF Posts of Southeast Asia.

The booklet is really a compilation of tables that update Smith's work, emphasizing the locations that used the various markings. The tables list the base postal units, types, dates of usage, and occasional special comments on size or appearance of the marking.

A lot more research is needed since the tables often carry comments such as "Nothing is known" or "Not seen" or "Nothing is recorded" for various posts. The tables cover Ceylon, India, Singapore, Hong Kong and, just after the war, Japan.

A list of abbreviations used in the tables appears at the end of the booklet. It would better serve the reader up front.

The last two booklets are printed on glossy paper. All of them are clearly printed with good quality illustrations of covers and markings.

One frustrating matter is the lack of publication data in any of the series. I learned from the introduction to the Ceylon book that the first of the series appeared in 1982. All items are still in print. □

Underwater Postal History

By Ernst M. Cohn

German Submarine Mail of World War I by Bernard A. Hennig. 6¼ by 9 inches softbound, vi + 125 pages. Austin H. Dulin, editor, Chicago 1991. Available from the author, 5944 West Montrose, Chicago, IL 60634.

This is primarily the pictorial record of what must be one of the best collections of mail carried by the German submarine *Deutschland* in 1916, as well as mail prepared for the ship's third trip that never took place because of worsened U.S.-German relations that ended with our entry into World War I.

After a dedication, preface, and acknowledgments, there is a brief history of the conception and execution of a unique idea, use of an unarmed, commercial submarine vessel to avoid the continental blockade and exchange needed goods with friendly neutrals.

The ships were primarily surface vessels, but with the capability of temporarily diving to elude pursuers. Only one ship ever completed its mission, and that one crossed the Atlantic on two trips from Germany to the U.S. and back.

The book continues with postal history details concerning each leg of each of its two voyages as well as the preliminaries and winding up of the third trip's preparations. All aspects of mail handling, including censorship and its violations, are considered. An appendix contains information about postcard souvenirs issued later.

The government-owned organization issued special insurance certificates and additional stamps to pay for heavier mailings. All of these are illustrated, and the author mentions that, as a result of putting this information together, he discovered some hanky panky with certificates and canceled stamps that bears further looking into.

There are many excellent photos of the people and the ship on which they traveled, of all the special forms and stamps, but most interesting of all, some of the envelopes for letters, particularly letters entrusted to ship's personnel while awaiting their return from the U.S. to Germany; official German mail (from Chicago!); and commercial mail from foreign offices of German companies.

An amazing variety of auxiliary markings was used, some especially developed for this service. Not only German mail (some with Bavarian stamps) but also Austrian and Hungarian mail had been readied for the third trip and was later returned to the originators, the special submarine fee (but not regular postage) being refunded upon request.

Whereas the first unmanned submarine mail was tried in 1871, this represents the first manned mail of that type.

Hennig cites seven sources that should be consulted for many of the details that he does not repeat, because this is essentially a record of his collection not only of stamps and covers but also of collateral material. It thus complements these other publications but, by itself, allows an excellent insight into the wide variety of collectibles from this narrow specialty.

Naturally, some types of covers are top rarities. The author suspects that there may be other, as yet unrecognized, items

still available to those who know what to look for. Here is *the* handbook that shows the tell-tale markings.

Paper, binding, printing, proofing, and particularly rendering of the large number of illustrations is tops. This is the kind of book about an odd philatelic topic that every all-round philatelist will want to possess.

Quite apart from any philatelic considerations, this book ought to be in the library of everyone who enjoys looking at the record of adventure. In that connection, I should like to add a personal note to this review.

Having published a brief history of the *Deutschland's* genesis and conversion to an armed submarine in the November 1990 *Scott Stamp Monthly*, I received a letter from the West Coast, telling me that the most precious cargo, presumably on the second crossing to the U.S., were three chemists from I. G. Farben, sent to Du Pont to help manufacture dyes in this country.

My reporter knew one of the men personally, having been a boy when the German was a guest in his father's house.

Attempts to get details about that part of the adventure from the American Chemical Society and Du Pont have been unsuccessful. Any ideas out there on how to proceed? None of the philatelic sources I have seen makes any mention of that type of cargo. □

Joining With Juniors

By MaryAnn Bowman

Stamps! A Young Collector's Guide by Brenda Ralph Lewis. ISBN 0-525-67341-5. Lodestar Books, affiliated with Dutton Children's Books, a division of Penguin Books USA Inc. \$14.95.

I've discovered a perfectly wonderful book about stamp collecting that is sure to please a young stamp collector. In fact, I purchased two copies: one for my personal philatelic reference shelf and one for my school's library.

I am frequently asked to suggest reading materials about stamp collecting. Finding current philatelic literature at the reading and interest level of a child is no easy task.

Thus I was especially pleased when I stumbled upon the book *Stamps! A Young Collector's Guide*. As I pride myself in keeping abreast of the trends in this fascinating field, I couldn't imagine how the book could have escaped my attention.

I was first attracted to it by its colorful illustrations of stamps on its cover. As most paper jacket covers never survive the handling of young eager hands, I removed the jacket and discovered that the book cover itself has the same wonderful color illustrations.

The hardcover book has less than 100 pages. Every page you turn to has numerous multi-colored stamp illustrations with short interesting captions. Each two-page spread is a complete chapter by itself. About one-third of the opened page contains "the lesson" with the remaining two-thirds of the page devoted to the captioned stamp illustrations.

Unlike many "how to" books about stamp collecting, this one starts out with just the kind of interesting tidbits of information and trivia that encourage the child to read just one

more page. Only after the reader has had his philatelic appetite sufficiently whetted will he learn about the tools of the trade, soaking stamps, caring for stamps, and other basics.

The reader is treated like a young adult. Topics generally reserved for adult collectors are touched upon in such a way that the topic is not too overbearing or too technical to appreciate and understand.

The book concludes with a useful reference section that includes a glossary, maps of the world, a stamp finder, and a helpful index.

Brenda Ralph Lewis is a prolific children's author, a stamp collector, and a stamp dealer living in England. The book was first published in England in 1990.

Collectors of all ages will find this an enjoyable book to read. Your club may want to consider purchasing a copy of it for school and public libraries in your communities. □

Literature Awards

STaMpsHOW 91

Gold Medals

The Stamps of Barbados, Edmund A. Bayley, editor.

56th American Philatelic Congress Book, 1990, Barbara Mueller, editor.

Postal History Journal, Harlan F. Stone, editor.

Vermeil Medals

Anatolia, Menachim Max Mayo, author.

The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City, 1870-1878, W. R. Weiss, Jr., author.

South Carolina Postal History and Illustrated Catalog of Postmarks, 1760-1860, R. J. Stets and H. S. Teal, authors.

Philatelie à la Française, The Philatelic Foundation, publisher.

Western Roundup, The Philatelic Foundation, publisher.

Mexicana, E. M. Nissen, editor.

The Experts Book, P. W. Schmid, author.

Silver Medals

Stamp Collecting, B. Krause, author.

Postal History Seminar '91, D. Kelsey, editor.

Bermuda Post, R. Shaw, editor.

The Heliograph, D. Kelsey, editor.

The Philatelic Foundation Quarterly, The Philatelic Foundation, publisher.

P. S. A Quarterly Journal of Postal History, R. D. Harris & D. DeBlois, authors.

The Revealer, P. Ryan Sr, editor.

Scalpel and Tongs, R. Chakravorty, editor.

Stamp Collector newspaper, D. Schiller Jr, editor.

Ukrainian Philatelist, I. Kuzych, editor.

U.S.C.S. Log, R. Rawlins, editor.

Vermont Philatelist, R. Hanson, editor.

Stamps, B. Healey, author.

Silver-Bronze Medals

Uniform Fourpenny Post in Ireland, W. Kane, author.

NYRBA Triple Crash Covers, Outlaw Flight and its Postal Markings, J. Grigore Jr, author.

Bermuda High, R. Dickgiesser, editor.

Bull's Eyes, W. Kriebel, editor.

The Cuban Philatelist, S. Garcia-Frutos, editor.

Empire State Postal History Society Bulletin, M. & D. Margulis, editors.

Philatelic Observer, K. Weigt, editor.

Upland Goose, Mrs. M. Wharton, editor.

Editor's Notes, D. Claussen, author.

Stamp Corner, P. McCarthy, author.

Bronze Medals

Stamp Collecting is Fun, I. M. Orenstein, author.

The Dispatcher, O. Atchison, editor.

Scouts on Stamps Society International Journal, J. Ulmer, editor.

Commentary, D. Claussen, author.

Netherlands-Indies: In Quest of Correct Franking, M. Hardjasudarma, author.

We U.S. Collectors, J. Weimer, author.

Certificate

Specialized Album for Stamps of the German Empire, J. Taylor, author. □

New Zealand Philatelic Federation Literature Exhibition

By Alan Warren

Two years ago the first Australasian area philatelic literature exhibition was held with 58 entries judged by the panel. On June 22, 1991 the New Zealand Philatelic Federation reported on this year's exhibit of 120 entries. Although the exhibition was designed to attract primarily Australia and New Zealand entries, a number of items were entered from abroad including the United States. The entries were classed into sections of books and handbooks (75 items), catalogs, and periodicals.

The panel consisted of Christchurch philatelists Myra Franks, Steven McLachlan, David Smitham, Robin Gwynn, and was chaired by Robert Samuel. The panel was to have included the late Laurie Franks.

Manuscripts were also included in the exhibition, and the jury elected not to award medals but rather to present four levels to indicate whether the material was commended for publication as is, needed revision prior to publication, had some good ideas which needed much rework, or received no award.

There is not sufficient room to list all of the awards. However, the major awards and those of some interest are listed here.

Grand Award and Large Vermeil

The Encyclopedia of British Empire Postage Stamps 1639-1952: Volume VI, The Leeward Islands, Christie's Robson Lowe.

Large Vermeil with Felicitations and Special Prize

Mashonaland: A Postal History 1890-96, Alan Drysdall and Dave Collis.

Large Vermeil

The Postmarks, Postal Routes and Principal Postage Rates of Southern Rhodesia to 1924, R. C. Knight and D. A. Mitchell.

British East Africa and British East Africa: A Supplement to the Handbook, John Minns.

Timbres de France au Type Merson, J. Storch and R. Françon.

Vermeil with Felicitations

Postmarks of Japanese-Occupied Malaya 1942-1945, Patrick N. Kearney.

Vermeil with Commendations of the Jury

A Postal History of the Samoan Islands: Part II, 1914-1989, Richard Burge, editor.

Vermeil

Sarawak: The Issues of 1871 and 1875: Plating Studies and Postal History, W. de B. P. Batty-Smith and W. N. Watterson.

Collecting New Zealand Stamps, Robin Gwynn.

The Small Queens of Canada, John Hillson.

Philatelic Literature: Compilation Techniques and Reference Sources, James Negus.

The Postmarks of Sierra Leone 1854 to 1961, F. L. Walton.

The American Philatelist, Bill Welch, editor.

Large Silver

Gold Fever, Kenneth J. Kutz.

Siberia: Postmarks and Postal History of the Russian Empire Period, P. E. Robinson.

The Czechoslovak Specialist, Society for Czechoslovak Philately.

Silver

The Posthorn, Gene Lesney, editor.

Bronze

Tin Canner, Tin Can Mail Study Circle.

Seaposter, Maritime Postmark Society.

Philatelic Paraphernalia, Philatelic History Society. □

Show Program Awards

The APS's Chapter Activities Committee announces winners of the 1990 CAC Show Program Contest, recognizing efforts involved in producing chapter show programs. The editors receive constructive written critiques.

Judges for 1990 were: John R. Mason, A. Stephen Patrick, and Robert A. Rosenblatt. All three are experienced writers and editors. Jane King Fohn was the chairman.

Thirty-seven APS chapters participated in three show program classes: I—single-page programs from APS chapter-sponsored shows; II—multipage same; III—multipage programs from shows co-sponsored by an APS chapter and any other groups, including those combining stamps with other collectibles.

Awards

Class I:

Gold Eupex 90, Euclid (Ohio) Stamp Club, J. B. Stotts, editor; Fallsplex XXVII, Cuyahoga Falls (Ohio) S.C., M. J. Lunsford, editor; Florida West Coast Stamp Expo, Clearwater & St. Petersburg S.C.'s & other groups, E. W. Parker, editor; and Pinplex 90, Pinnacle S.C., Little Rock, Arkansas, Jim Felton, editor.

Silver Harrisplex 90, Harrison County (Clarksburg, W.Va.) S.C., R. Riethmiller, editor; Linplex 90, Lincoln (Nebraska) S.C., L. Kinyon, editor; Muskogee (Oklahoma) Stamp Show, G. Weisser, editor; Wacopex (Waco, Texas) 90, J. Berryhill, editor.

Silver-Bronze Houplex (Houston, Texas) 90, W. R. McBride, editor; Montapex 90, Montgomery, Alabama, G. D. Wall, editor; and Northpex 90, Plattsburgh (New York) S.C., Glenn Estus, editor.

Class II

Gold Mid-Cities (Arlington, Texas) S.C., A. von Reyn, editor; Sescal 90, (Los Angeles, California) D. Appar, editor; Springplex 90 (Springfield, Virginia), Joe Criscuoli, editor; and Yorcopex 90, (York, Pennsylvania), Diane P. Gray, editor.

Vermeil Gulfplex 90 (Biloxi, Mississippi) J. Brauchle & C. Marousky, editors; Nashplex 90 (Nashville, Tennessee) C. Freeze, editor; and Twinplex 90 (St. Paul, Minnesota) J. Grabowski, editor.

Silver Hagerplex II, Hagerstown (Maryland) S.C., R. Rush Jr, Editor; Knoxplex 90, Knoxville (Tennessee) S.C., Neal Henderson, editor; Lancopex 90, Lancaster County (Pennsylvania) J. G. Boyles, editor; Louipex 90, Louisville (Kentucky) T. C. Sherwood, editor; Qpex 90 (Manchester, New Hampshire) R. Dion, editor; Ropex 90, Rochester (New York) R. A. Kase, editor; and Stepex 90, Elmira (New York) Alan Parsons, editor.

Silver-Bronze Scopex 90, Mt. Nittany (State College, Pennsylvania) Ernest Bergman, editor.

Bronze Upstate Stamp Show 90 (Greenville, South Carolina) K. Davidson, editor.

Class III

Gold Aripex 90 (Phoenix, Arizona) R. D. Corless, editor; Empex 90, (Syracuse, New York) G. Chicoine, editor; Florex 90 (Orlando, Florida) S. Patrick, editor; Westpex 90 (San Francisco, California) A. & W. Menuz, editors.

Silver-Bronze Philatelic Show 90 (Boxborough, Massachusetts) Peter Pierce, editor; Topex 90 (Providence, Rhode Island) James Lombardi, editor; and Valpex 90 (King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, Earl Bossert, editor.

Bronze Delpex 90, (Wilmington, Delaware) F. S. Dickson, editor; Lakeshore 90 (Dorval, P.Q., Canada) F. Brisse, editor. □

Coming Literature Competitions

• **Genova '92, World Exhibition of Thematic Philately**, under FIP patronage, to be held in Genoa, Italy, September 18-27, 1992, has extended the deadline to submit applications for the literature competition.

Several categories of literature will be accepted:

1. Handbooks and special studies on thematic;
2. Catalogs of thematic interest (stamps, postal stationery, cancellations, etc.)
3. Periodicals;
4. Periodicals of thematic organizations;
5. Other periodicals with thematic articles;
6. Articles of thematic philately. (Minimum 10 articles.)

Send a number 10 self-addressed envelope for an application blank, or \$2 for Bulletin 1 including an application blank, to U.S. Commissioner George T. Guzzio, 134 Berkeley Place, Brooklyn, NY 11217-3604.

Completed applications should be returned to the U.S. Commissioner by November 15th. □

• **Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum** is accepting literature for display and competition in its Sixteenth Annual Philatelic Literature Fair scheduled for April 4 and 5, 1992.

There are no fees or applications necessary to enter the Fair. The categories of literature include handbooks, catalogs, and journals.

Further information can be obtained by writing to the Museum, 235 Wellesley Street, Weston, MA 02193, c/o Joseph W. Mullin, or by calling (617) 894-6735. □

►► President's Message (From page 49, column one.)

not possible for us to offer editing service of that magnitude on a no-fee basis. What I hope we can do is provide an initial diagnostic review that will identify the areas where fixes are needed. If we think the manuscript needs professional attention, we'll say so—and if the submitters request, we'll identify individuals who have proven track records as philatelic copy editors. Should they decide to seek expert editing help, it will be up to the contributors to contact whomever they choose and negotiate the fee. (We decidedly *don't* want to give the impression of offering a free vehicle check, then charging for a full brake job before letting the car back out of the shop! This is intended as a service, not a money-making opportunity for WU 30 or any of its volunteer critics.)

We also need volunteers to do the critiques. I'll work up a "how to" packet and (at least during the initial stages) provide central overview—but we've got a goodly number of members with the skills to do the evaluations (and that obviously should include every one accredited as a literature judge).

Send your offer to join the volunteer pool to me, with any parameters you feel appropriate (e.g., periodicals only or topical/thematic material preferred or only x-number of items per year). If you've already told me in person, please do so again in writing so that I don't disappoint you and embarrass myself as a result of poor memory.

One final comment: only WU 30 members can submit

items for free critique. Certainly, a WU member who's an officer of a society can submit the society journal or handbook manuscript . . . but I'd really like to see a more direct relationship than "on behalf of." I'm parochial enough to believe that every U.S. philatelic author, editor, publisher, and society publications committee member should belong to Writers Unit 30. The critique service is one among many present and potential benefits which those individuals will receive—and help give—for the improvement of our peculiar literature genre. □

Procedures for No-Fee WU 30 Critique Service

1. Submissions accepted only from WU 30 members.

2. *For periodicals:* Submit the most recent issue(s)—if applicable, 3 or 4 consecutive issues. Include postage equivalent to four times the first class mailing fee for WU 30 mailing expenses; any unused amount will be returned.

3. *For books/book manuscripts:* Inquire before sending, with brief description of item; please include stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

4. All submissions/ correspondence to: Charles J. Peterson, Box 5559, Laurel, MD 20726. [Phone: (301) 776-9822.] □

Editor's note: Since I have just begun publishing a specialized newsletter on East German philately, I decided to submit it as a guinea pig for the new critique service. The evaluation follows here, so everyone can see what to expect. However, rest assured that the service is offered on a confidential basis. The critique of your journal is for you and your organization, not for publication.

If you would like a free copy of DDReflections, drop me a card. □

Writers Unit 30 Critique Service

Name of Publication: *DDReflections*
Issue(s) Submitted: Issue number 1 (September 1991)
(1 copy)
Submitted by: Ken Lawrence, editor: P.O. Box
3568, Jackson, MS 39207-3568

Initial Comments

This is the first issue of a new specialized journal concerned with (former) German Democratic Republic postal issues and postal history. It is intended as the organ of a new "GDR Study Group" of the GPS; at time of issue, the group was in the process of formation. Text for this initial issue appears to be computer produced on a near-letter-quality (NLQ) dot matrix printer, with illustrations pasted on prior to photo-offset printing of the pages. Title page appears to be on professionally prepared "letterhead" (title, subtitle, issue number, editor's address). Dimensions 8½ by 11 inches, stapled, 14 pages.

Because this is a "getting started" issue, many of the features of an established society organ are absent (list of officers, table of contents, input from members, etc.); the

editor also acknowledges the production limitations resulting from the unbudgeted volunteer nature of the first issue.

Specific Critique

1. Scope/purpose/utility: Serves a valid need, with minimal overlapping on areas already being covered; there's lots of study and reporting needed in this specialty field. (The only sub-specialties that would appear to involve duplicative effort are hand overprints and District markings.)

2. Title: The longer I think about it, the more apt the title seems—"reflections" as in looking back; "reflections" as on the other side; as in "holding a mirror up to life"; as in the intentional-or-not allusion to Germany's well-known weekly news/opinion journal, *Der Spiegel*. The only question with the title is, how do you say it? "Dee Dee Reflections," or "Dee Dee Arr ections"? [Now if it only were a journal/study group dealing with characteristics of the genuine issues of the Vatican, one could call it "Genu-flections"!]

3. Production: Admittedly in need of improvement. The dot-matrix text is clunky but serviceable, except in a few places where it apparently printed in draft mode rather than NLQ (first lines of several of the letters-to-editor). Illustrations are less good. The title page has a stunning, highly effective cover which should grab the attention of any GDR collector from across the room. However, the ZKD label on cover (page 3) is an illegible blob, as are some of the key aspects of stamp illustrations on page 6 and the (Express label?) on cover at page 10. This could perhaps have been corrected by better use of a filter when photocopying. On page 6, where stamp denominations are critical to the story, the denominations could have been typed/handwritten under the illustrations or the *Junge Welt* head retained and different (more reproducible) examples shown. There's good use of photos: appropriate to the material and well placed in the journal as a break in the otherwise solid text. When the best copying capabilities aren't available, the editor often has the chance to be more creative in the copy process or more selective in the material. This is particularly important when the philatelic point is dependent upon the illustration(s).

Column and article heads need better setoff; again, with improved production means, heads can be set in larger/more distinctive type.

Single column text on 8½ by 11 inch paper is rather too long for comfortable reading.

Subtitle on cover is far too black/too large. With light NLQ text at bottom, the page is top heavy.

4. Mechanics: No table of contents; even with this maiden effort there's material of permanent reference value that shouldn't get lost/overlooked for lack of a contents box.

The journal has underlined headers starting with page 2. Suggest it would be more attractive and less disruptive of text to use footers. This could also help with the problem of top heaviness on page 1.

When the journal becomes institutionalized, consider including copyright notice, an editorial/contributor disclaimer statement, an ISSN.

5. Content: Some good long-term-value information, more than expected in a start-up issue. Perhaps a little heavy on the

need to set the propaganda record straight, as opposed to all the needs and opportunities for philatelic study. However, there's considerable justification for that approach and it's well within the bounds of the first issue where it gives a rationale for the new study group and journal.

Henry Roehl's letter included a special request involving "a place near our house" but there's no city identification due to editorial style for letters. That style may be OK once the group has a member directory (although it doesn't locate non-member writers), but it runs the risk of losing context of the writer's statements. Whatever style is followed, in this case the editor should have been sensitive to the text of the letter and put in a [bracketed] location.

In several places there's a generic request for articles - otherwise known as "the distinguishing cry of the society journal editor." Obviously the editor must also be working off-line by directly approaching selected potential contributors. But even within the journal pages it helps to be specific by putting out a call for readers knowledgeable of/interested in such aspects as: registered and express mail procedures; specific stamp issues (the officials, or the worker series); history/functions/products of Transpress; ZKD labels; DDR use of POL perfins; cancellation name changes as a result of historical/political events; censorship (with some particularly interesting possibilities on foreign correspondence transiting East and/or West Berlin, subject to the attention of either or both sides); East German Army military mail procedures, including that of troops stationed outside of the DDR; the mails of members of the Group of Soviet Forces Germany (could they/did they use local mail facilities?); etc.

6. Other: There's no problem with establishment of a somewhat high initial subscription fee (\$20 for 4 issues) to pay the tab until a formal treasury and budget are established. In fact, that seems both fair and practical under the circumstances, and I don't think this will deter any seriously interested folks. Accounting for intake vs. outgo should be a relatively straight-forward process. However, there's much more potential for problems when catalogs, announcements and covers are sold or traded at "(h)igh prices, just below retail" to help support the newsletter.

In the first place, it's much harder to audit such sales since there's no good way to pin down the "profit" (what was the basis for the original cost?); that becomes even fuzzier when "trade" is included. Second, it's not a good inducement or member service to offer items at near retail (and how do you determine "retail?"); the general philosophy of study group sales is to give members a chance to buy in confidence at generally lower prices than they can "outside," with a reasonably small amount taken off the top to support the SG. Third, you're making yourself extremely vulnerable to criticism and suspicion. If you want to sell/trade items on your own behalf, you can set whatever price you want and let free market conditions apply. But when you make the statement that you're doing this on behalf of the society, or imply that all profit goes to support the journal, you're asking for trouble.

Finally, the subtitle identifying the journal/SG as affiliated with the Germany Philatelic Society is premature—at least according to the internal content it was at the time the journal

was issued. Such claims should not be made until they have become a reality.

7. One Last Remark: As perhaps the highest compliment a literature critic can make, I'm enclosing my \$20 dues for the next three issues (I'm keeping the annotated critique copy which I'll count towards the subscription).

September 11, 1991
(Date of critique)

Charles J. Peterson
(Reviewer's name)

□

►► **What Do They Pay?** (From page 49, column two.)

Before I was fired by *Linn's*—which had asked me whether I objected to having my name placed on the masthead as a contributing editor because Laurence wanted some writers to appear there—Laurence again raised the question of simultaneous publication in Canada and asked me to stop writing for the Canadian paper. The question became moot with my firing.

After that, I asked *Stamp Collector* if it could use my stuff. The initial response was negative but I sent in stuff on spec. The pay was \$10 a column. It slowly rose to \$30 a column until David Schiller took over the editorship from Dane Claussen, who also had reservations about simultaneous publication in Canada. Schiller offered more pay, \$50 a column, if I could delay appearance in Canada awhile. Since *CSN* often "sat" on copy for weeks because of its less-frequent publication, I agreed.

Stamp Collector also pays a token \$10 for each reply to its "You Asked" feature. I appear to be the authority on Plate Number Coils, Germany, and political topics, such as why the cross is crooked on Hungary's St. Stephen's crown.

One last word: *The Plain Dealer* increased the fee on the stamp column to \$50 a week in 1980, but saved all that when it turned to wire copy in 1984, ending any local coverage. Thus, the paper missed the appearance of the Carousel stamps at Cedar Point, Ohio, and the local angles on Jesse Owens, a Cleveland. It also has never reported that part of Avery's production of pressure-sensitive stamps is in Greater Cleveland. Finally, it has all but stopped covering local stamp shows. □

Footnote: Bill Welch says The American Philatelist pays \$50 for full-length articles. □

►► **Last Words** (From page 72, column two.)

In the change to a new residence since the Second Quarter issue I have fallen far behind with everything.

Al Starkweather's letter(s)—to which I alluded in a previous issue—were one of the delayed projects.

It was my firm intention to forward them promptly to Ken for his action, but Ken told me October 17 that I hadn't. I will dig them out and get them off to Ken for next issue consideration for sure. My apology, Al.

Thanks to Messrs. Hines, Maurer, Warren, *et al.* who have communicated with ol' lonesome Joe of late.

If you're using—or plan to acquire it or something like it—*WordPerfect* 5.1, contact me. I might be able to help. I have some scrapes on my hide from working with it for a few

days now and can at least tell you where some of the sharper edges are that need to be avoided.

The program is excellent, complicated, at times infuriating, but always does what it promises. You *must* learn to speak *WordPerfect*. It has the computer's habit of refusing to do anything when addressed in any other language than its own.

It has some tar-baby aspects as well. When you get in a feature, there is always at least one way out. You might not know the way, but the program does. It sits there and steadfastly ignores your struggles to free yourself until you at last hit the combination it needs to free you—or *Ctrl-Alt-Del* to start all over again.

Conversely, when you're on the outside wanting into a feature, you need to know a few things, such as the name (no, not *your* name for it, but *WordPerfect's* name) of the feature you wish to enter, and of course the keystrokes necessary to open the door, go through, and close the door behind you. Surprisingly, some features seem to need a vigorous slam of that door behind you. When you first begin trying (you'll be trying—and trying—and trying—) to make your first Macro, you'll understand what slammed doors (in the face and across the wump) mean!

My most recent acquisitions were Microsoft *MS-DOS* 5.0 and *Spinrite Plus*, the former a warp factor eight ahead of version 4.2 (which I also had and used for a while), and the latter the biggest pacifier any computer or computer's baby ever had stuffed into its floppy slot. It has made my hard disk purr quietly, efficiently, and—above all—has given me *peace of mind*. Glad to discuss these, or my other equipment, the Hewlett-Packard *LaserJet III*, the "IBM Clone" 80386-25, and the Epson *LQ-510* 24-pin dot-matrix printer.

There are so many new products and upgrades of current products—both hardware and software—in the computer world that just to get a general idea of what is coming on the market each month requires fairly careful reading of several fat magazines.

One must decide at some point to go with what is desired and affordable and not be tempted to rush out and upgrade or replace what is working well and quickly. Several software purchases have been of little use to me because major revisions were quickly available after my purchase in an upgrade (more \$, of course). That just adds to the pile of useful but unused software in my boxes.

My original *WordPerfect* was version 5.0. After about a year it was revised considerably and appeared in version 5.1, which I promptly acquired. I would never go back to the 5.0 version—but it is still in the boxes of diskettes, unused.

My current *PC Tools* is, I think, the third version I've bought, and I have just ordered yet another upgrade—mainly to obtain two in-depth special features of the latest version, which would cost more purchased separately than the upgraded and considerably otherwise improved new version does.

Usually, upgrades are sold at about 20 percent or so of "retail" price to registered owners of the previous version of a program. I notice that a few makers apparently realize that this quick-upgrading is irritating some of us and are offering free upgrades if a new version appears in x-months' time.

Write. I will send you back a stamp if you ask me. □

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Secretary-Treasurer's Report (As of Oct. 15, 1991.)

Welcome

We welcome the following new members who have joined WU 30 since our August 12, 1991, report:

1604 Raymond L. Buse, Jr., P.O. Box 709, Covington, KY 41012. Philatelist. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

1605 Jean M. Ulmer, 6908 Trowbridge Cove, Germantown, TN 38138. Editor: *SOSSI* (Scouts on Stamps International). Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

1606 David G. Phillips, P.O. Box 611388, North Miami, FL 33161. Editor: *American Stampless Cover Catalog* and *American Illustrated Cover Catalog*. Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.

1607 Toni Heisey, 6678 Comstock Court, San Diego, CA 92111. Free-lance writer for *Wine & Spirits*, *Navy Times*, *Federal Times*, and others. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

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Some members still do not send timely address changes to me. The USPS charges us 35¢ per notice *they* send. Prompt change of address notices to me assure your journal will continue arriving in a timely manner.

Your cooperation is solicited and appreciated.

George B. Griffenhagen
WU30 Secretary-Treasurer
2501 Drexel Street
Vienna, VA 22180

The Last Words

By Joe F. Frye

The spell-checker says the issue is 22,684 words long. The *entire* issue, that is. A lollipop to the first letter with the correct answer to the question: "How could I place that correct number in this first paragraph of my little blurb, even before the blurb is a blurb?" (Specify flavor preferred.)

At this point ▶ *WordPerfect* says there are 330,917 bytes of data in the file for this issue. By the time I get it finished, well over a third of a million. Fat number for a 24-pager, but several blocks of widdy-biddy-type add quickly to the number.

Once more—*WordPerfect* is not two words. It's *one*. ▶▶

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This issue brings another of Ken's innovations. Three-column format for the Letters department. Let him have your opinion of this and everything else about the issue.

If you don't want him snapping at your heels, write me. Of course you know I'll send your letter on to him and he'll jump your case anyhow.

▶▶ Page 71, column one.